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Revolted Woman

Charles F. Harper



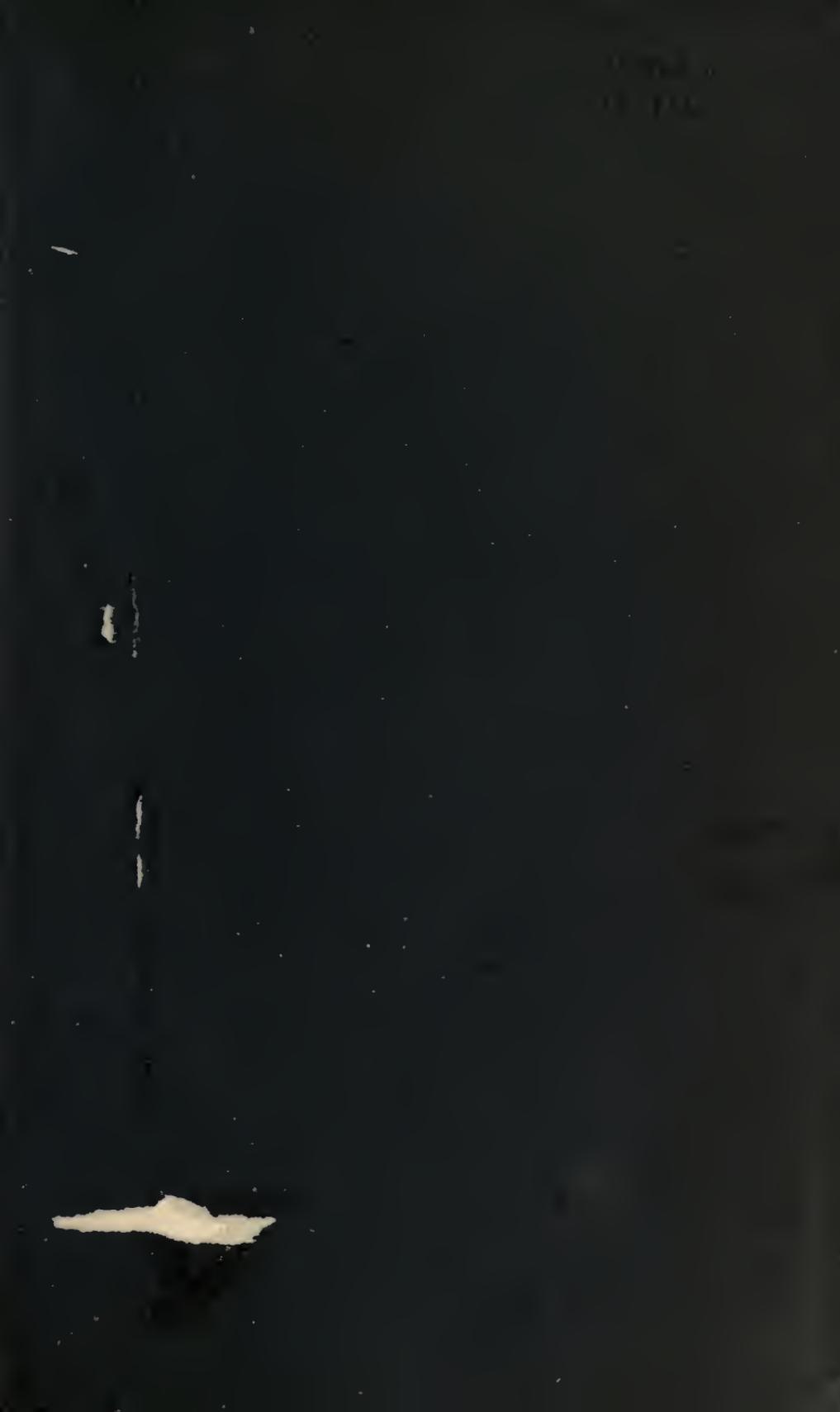
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REVOLTED WOMAN

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PAST, PRESENT, AND TO COME

BY

CHARLES G. HARPER

AUTHOR OF 'THE BRIGHTON ROAD,' 'DRAWING FOR REPRODUCTION,'
'THE MARCHES OF WALES,' &c., &c.



London:

ELKIN MATHEWS
VIGO STREET

1894



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'I am ashamed, that women are so simple
To offer war, where they should kneel for peace ;
Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,
When they are bound to serve, love, and obey.'

Taming of the Shrew.



*I*T might have been supposed, having in mind her first and most stupendous faux pas, that Woman would be content to sit, for all time, humbly under correction, satisfied with her lot until the crack of doom, when man and woman shall be no more; when heaven and earth shall pass away, and pale humanity come to judgment.

But it is essentially feminine and womanlike (and therefore of necessity illogical) that she should be forgetful of the primeval curse which Mother Eve brought upon the race, and that she should, instead of going in sackcloth and ashes for her ancestor's disobedience, seek instead, not only to be the equal of man, but, in her foremost advocates—the strenuous and ungenerous females who periodically crucify the male sex in sexual novels written under manly pseudonyms—aspire to rule him, while as yet she has no efficient control over her own hysterical being.

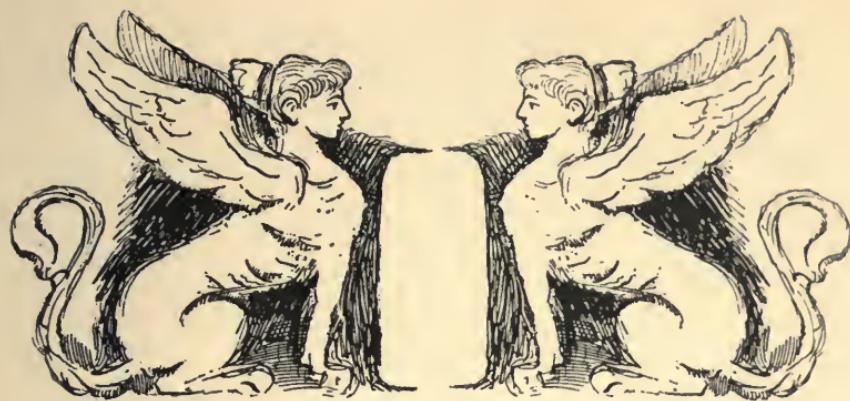
Humanity is condemned by the First Woman's disobedience to earn a precarious livelihood by the sweat of its brow. All the toil and trouble of this work-a-day world proceed from her sex; and yet the cant of 'Woman's Mission' fills the air, and the New Woman is promised us as some sort of a pedagogue who shall teach the 'Child-Man' how to toddle in the paths of virtue and content. How absurd it all is, when the women who write these things pander to the depraved palate which gained Holywell Street a living and an unenviable notoriety years ago; when they obtain three-fourths of their readers from their fellow-women who read their productions hopeful of indecency, and conceive themselves cheated if they do not find it. Let us, however, do these women writers, or 'Literary Ladies,' as they have labelled themselves—margarine masquerading as 'best fresh'—the justice to acknowledge that they do not halt half-way on the road to viciousness; though to reach their goal they wade knee-deep in abominations. Here, indeed, they are no cheats, and it remains the unlikeliest sequel that you close their pages and yet do not find Holywell-Street outdone.

Consider: If morals are to be called into ques-

tion, can it be disputed that, as compared with Woman, Man is the moral creature, and has ever been, from the time of Potiphar's wife, up to the present?

Woman is the irresponsible creature who cannot reason nor follow an argument to its just conclusion—who cannot control her own emotions, nor rid herself of superstition. What question more pertinent, then, to ask than this: If mankind is to be led by the New Woman, is she, first of all, sure of the path?

CHARLES G. HARPER.



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I.—WOMAN UP TO DATE.

‘Certain Women also made us astonished.’—*Luke*, xxiv. 22.

HE is upon us, the Emancipated Woman. Privileges once the exclusive rights of Man are now accorded her without question, and, clad in Rational Dress, she is preparing to leap the few remaining barriers of convention. Her last advances have been swift and undisguised, and she feels her position at length strong enough to warrant the proclamation that she does not merely claim equal rights with man, but intends to rule

him. Such symbols of independence as latch-keys and loose language are already hers ; she may smoke—and does ; and if she does not presently begin to wear trousers upon the streets—what some decently ambiguous writer calls bifurcated continuations!—we shall assume that the only reason for the abstention will be that womankind are, generally speaking, knock-kneed, and are unwilling to discover the fact to a censorious world which has a singular prejudice in favour of symmetrical legs.

Society has been ringing lately with the writings and doings of the pioneers of the New Woman, who forget that Woman's Mission is Submission ; but although the present complexion of affairs seems to have come about so suddenly, the fact should not be blinked that in reality it is but the inevitable outcome, in this age of toleration and *laissez faire*, of the Bloomerite agitation, the Women's Rights frenzy, the Girl of the Period furore, and the Divided Skirt craze, which have attracted public attention at different times, ranging from over forty years ago to the present day.

Several apparently praiseworthy or harmless movements that have attracted the fickle enthusiasm of women during this same period have really been byways of this movement of emancipation. Thus, we have had the almost wholly admirable enthusiasm for the Hospital Nurse's career ; the (already much-abused) profession of Lady Journalist ; the Woman

Doctor ; the Female Detective ; the Lady Members of the School Board ; and the (it must be allowed) most gracious and becoming office of Lady Guardian of the Poor.

Side by side, again, with these, are the altogether minor and trivial affectations of Lady Cricketers, the absurd propositions for New Amazons, or Women Warriors, who apparently are not sufficiently well read in classic lore to know what the strict following of the Amazons' practice implied ; nor can they reck aught of the origin of the Caryatides.

Again, the Political Woman is coming to the front, and though she may not yet vote, she takes the part of the busybody in Parliamentary Elections, and already sits on Electioneering Committees.

In this connexion, it should not readily be forgotten that Mrs. Brand earned her husband the somewhat humiliating reputation of having been sung into Parliament by his wife at the last election for Wisbech, and thus gave the coming profession of Women Politicians another push forward. The dull agricultural labourers of that constituency gave votes for vocal exercises on improvised platforms in village school-rooms, nor thought of aught but pleasing the lady who could sing them either into tears with the cheap sentimentality of *Auld Robin Grey*, melt them with the poignant pathos of *'Way down the Swanee River*, or excite their laughter over the equally ready humour of the latest *soi-*

disant ‘comic’ song from the London Halls. Think upon the most musical, most melancholy prospect thus opened out before our prophetic gaze! What matter whether you be Whig or Tory, Liberal or Conservative, Rotten-Tim-Healeyite, or a member of Mr. Justin MacCarthy’s tea-party, so long as your wife can win the rustics’ applause by her singing of such provocations to tears or laughter as *The Banks of Allan Water* or *Ta-ra-ra Boom-de ay*, or whatever may be the current successor of that vulgar chant?

But the so-called ‘New Purity’ movement, and novel evangelists of that description, most do occupy the attention of the modern woman who is in want of an occupation.

We smile when we read of the proceedings of Mrs. Josephine Butler and her following of barren women who are the protagonists of the New Purity; for woman has ever been the immoral sex, from the time of Potiphar’s wife to these days when the Divorce Courts are at once the hardest worked in the Royal Courts of Justice, and the scenes of the most frantic struggles on the part of indelicate women, who, armed with opera-glasses and seated in the most favourable positions on Bench or among counsel, gloat over what should be the most repellent details in this constant public washing of dirty private linen, and survey the co-respondents with delighted satisfaction. The intensity of the joy shown by those

who are fortunate enough to obtain a seat in court on a more than usually loathsome occasion is only equalled at the other extreme by the poignancy of regret exhibited by those unhappy ladies who have been unsuccessful in their scheming to secure places.

And, again, the reclamation of corrupt women, if not impossible, is rarely successful, for 'woman is at heart a rake,' and, as Ouida says, who has, one might surmise, unique opportunities of knowing, she is generally 'corrupt because she likes it.' Thus, throughout the whole range of history, Pagan or Christian, courtesans have never been to seek. They have, these *filles de joie*, always succeeded in attracting to themselves wealth and genius, luxury and intellect; and through their paramount influence, Society at the present day is corrupt to extremity. The Evangelists of the New Purity, who hold that the innate viciousness of man is the cause of woman's subjection and inferiority, can have no reading nor any knowledge of the world's history while they continue to proclaim their views; or else they know themselves, even as they preach, for hypocrites. For woman has ever been the active cause of sin, from the Fall to the present time, and doubtless will so continue until the end. It is not always, as they would have you believe, from necessity that the virtuous woman turns her back upon virtue, but very frequently from choice and a delight in sin and wrong-doing. How then

shall the New Purity arise from the Old Corruption?

‘Who can find a virtuous woman?’ asks Solomon (Prov. xxxi. 10), and goes on to say that her price is far above rubies: doubtless for the same reason that rubies are so highly valued—because they are so scarce.

The trade of courtesan has always been numerous and powerful, and has been constantly recruited from every class. Vanity, of course, is the great inducement; love of dress and power, and greed of notoriety, are other compelling forces; and a joy in outraging all decency and propriety, of defying conventions of respectability and religion, is answerable for the rest.

This kind of woman makes all mankind her prey, and has no generous instincts whatever. Everything ministers to her vanity and lavish waste. It is a matter of notoriety that men of light and leading are drawn after her all-conquering chariot, and that in three out of every four plays she is the heroine.

She is cruel as the grave, heartless as a stone, and extravagant beyond measure. Her kind have utterly wasted the patrimony of thousands of dupes, and having reduced them to beggary the most abject and forlorn, have sought fresh victims of their insatiable greed.

They have ruined kingdoms, like the mistresses of Louis XIV. and XV. of France; they have brought shame and dishonour upon nations, like

the dissolute women of Charles the Second's court, who toyed with his wantons at Whitehall while the Dutch guns thundered off Tilbury ; they have risen, like Madame de Pompadour, to a height from which they looked down upon diplomatists of the Great Powers of Europe—and scorned them ; and the blood shed during many sanguinary wars has been shed at their behest. Courtesans have married into the peerage of England, and, indeed, some of the oldest titles—not to say the bluest blood—of the three kingdoms derive from the king's women : Nell Gwynne, whose offspring became Duke of Saint Albans ; Louise de Querouaille, created Duchess of Portsmouth ; Barbara Palmer, made Duchess of Cleveland ; and others. Lais and Phryne belong not to one period, but to all eras alike ; Aspasia and Fredegondas are of all countries and of every class.

But 'pretty Fanny's ways' are many and diverse. It may be that she is incapacitated or restrained from living as full and as free a life as she could wish. Very well : then she becomes a New Puritan, whose self-appointed functions are to those privy cupboards in which repellent skeletons are concealed ; to the social sewers ; and, in fine, to all those places where she can gratify the morbid curiosity which actuates the New Puritanical mind, rather than the hope of, or belief in, achieving anything for the benefit of the race.

If she has no wish to become a New Puritan,

there be many other modern fads in which she may fulfil a part. She may, as a New Traveller, show us the glory of the New Travel, in the manner of that greatly daring lady, the intrepid Mrs. French-Sheldon, who, travelling at the heels of the masculine explorers of African wilds (carried luxuriously in a litter, accompanied with cases of champagne and a large escort of Zanzibari porters), went forth to study the untutored savage in his native wilds. But when the untutored presented themselves before this up-to-date traveller *unclothed* as well as unread, that very properly-tutored lady screamed, and distributed loin-cloths to these happy and yet unabashed primitives. She delivered an address before the British Association on her return from that unnecessary and futile expedition, in which she tickled the sensibilities of the assembled *savants* by describing how she kept her hundred and thirty Zanzibari coolies in order with a whip. She told the members of the Association that 'she went into Africa with all delicacy and womanliness.' Possibly; but judging her out of her own mouth, she must have left a goodly portion of those qualities behind her in the Dark Continent.

Other women travellers—of the type of Miss Dowie, for instance—are more unconventional, if less adventurous. She, a true exemplar of the women who would forget their sex—and make others forget it—if they could, climbed the Karpathian mountains in search of a little cheap

notoriety, clad in knickerbockers, jacket, and waist-coat, and redolent of tobacco from the smoking of cigarettes. Her adventures added nothing to the gaiety of readers, nor to the world's store of science ; but we were the richer by one more spectacular extravaganza.

This is that somewhat repellent type, the mannish woman, who is not content to charm man by the grace and sweetness of her femininity, but must aspire to be a poor copy of himself. The type is common nowadays, and the individuals of it have gone through several phases of their singular craze. These are they who walk with the guns of a shooting party ; who tramp the stubble and arouse the ill-humours of that creature of wrath and impatience, the sportsman who is eager for a drive at the birds. These women, not dismayed by the butchery of the *battue*, look on, and even carry a gun themselves ; but they are the nuisances of the party, and flush covey after covey by showing themselves to the wary birds when they should be crouching down beside some windy hedge, in a moist and clammy October ditch.

' Let us be unconventional, or we die ! ' is the unspoken, yet very evident, aspiration of the Modern Woman ; and, really, the efforts made in the direction of the unconventional are so uniformly extravagant that we almost, from sheer weariness and disgust, begin to wish she had gone some way toward adopting the alternative.

The New Woman will know naught of convention, nor submission. Her advocates do not hail from Altruria ; they are aggressive, and devoured with a zeal for domination, in revolt from the 'centuries of slavery' to which, according to themselves, they have been compelled by Man. 'Man,' shrieks one, 'is always in mischief or in bed.' But she will have this changed ; not, indeed, in the present generation of vipers, which is stubborn and stiff-necked in its wicked ways ; but she will see, and urges her fellow-women to see also, that proper principles are spanked into the coming generations. Considering, however, that the nursery has ever been the woman's peculiar province, surely the blame, if blame there be, must rest with her for the past and present faulty upbringing of the race. If 'proper principles' have not already had their part in the education of man, surely that must be owing solely to woman's flagrant dereliction of duty.

Instances, neither few nor far between, may be urged of wives and mothers, possibly also sisters and maiden aunts, who have raised men to action and dragged them from a disgraceful sloth to an honourable industry. [True, indeed, it were an altogether unjustifiable heresy to deny their influence and its beneficent effects ; but to use it as an argument for placing women on an equality with men would be a *non sequitur* of the most absurd description.]The influence wielded by those good women was so powerful for good because they were true

to themselves and their sex ; because they were, in a word, so womanly. The influence of the New Woman upon the man is, and shall be, *nil*, because the spirit of antagonism between the sexes is being aroused by her pretensions, and comradeship becomes impossible when woman and man fight for supremacy.

Women's advocates come and go like summer flies, provoking to wrath by their insistent buzzing, but, when caught and examined, proving to be insignificant enough. They have their little day, and cease to be. Who, for instance, now remembers Mrs. Mona Caird, that unconventional person who floated into publicity on the 'Marriage a Failure' correspondence of the *Daily Telegraph*, some few years ago, and, in the heyday of her notoriety, wrote and published that weak and ineffectual novel, *The Wing of Azrael*? Other women, more advanced in shamelessness, have taken her place, and capped the freedom of her views with outlooks of greater licence.

And so the game proceeds : each woman daring a little further than her fellow-adventurer into the muddy depths of free selection ; of freedom in contracting marriages and licence in dissolving them ; each newcomer shocking the sensibilities of women readers with delightful thrills from the impropriety, expressed or implied, that runs through her pages as inevitably as the watermark runs through 'laid' paper.

It is amusing to note that, following the lead of the late lamented George Eliot, the greater number of these women writers of sexual novels scribble under manly pseudonyms. What, then ! doth divinity after all hedge a man so nearly that to masquerade as a 'John Oliver Hobbes,' or a 'George Egerton,' is to draw an admiring crowd of women worshippers where, as plain Miss or Mrs., your immortal writings would fall flat ? What a deplorable *cacoëthes impri-mendi* this is, to be sure, that seizes upon the palpitating authoresses of *Yellow Aster*, *Dancing Fawns*, or *Heavenly Twins* ; and how depraved the taste for indelicate innuendo and theories of licence that renders these books popular !

This manner of thing destroys all the respect for home life upon which English society was, until late years, so broadly based, and domesticity in consequence is become an old-fashioned virtue among women. They are only the older generation of matrons who practise it now, and when their race is run, and the New Woman shall have become sole mistress, the sweet domesticity of the Englishman's home will have vanished.

For the New Woman is not womanly, except in the physiological sense, and there she cannot help herself. She will inevitably be the mother of the coming generation, but beyond that function imposed upon her by Nature, she is not feminine. She is rather what Mr. Frederic Harrison describes as the 'advanced woman who wants to be abortive

man,' and she holds the fallacy that what man may do woman may do also—and more!

Directly a woman marries, she considers that she has full licence; although, goodness knows! the unmarried girls of to-day are latitudinarian enough, and do, unreproved, things that thirty years ago would have branded them with an ineffaceable mark of shame.

The pretty girl of to-day, who has earned her right to wear a wedding-ring, has no sooner returned from her honeymoon than she sets out upon a campaign of conquests. Smart men, who hate to be bored with the unmarried girl, before whom they must be either silent or discreet, hang around the young matron at garden parties and dances, or flirt shamefully in the semi-rusticity of the country house or shooting-box, and discuss with her the latest veiled obscenity of Mr. Oscar Wilde's, or enlarge upon the ethics of a second Mrs. Tanqueray with an unblushing frankness that argues long acquaintance with and study of these putrescent topics. The young matron has full licence at this day, and the divorce courts afford some faint inkling of how she uses it. She aspires to be the boon companion of the men; she plays billiards with the manly cue, and not infrequently she can give the average male billiard-player points, and then beat him.

It seems but a few years since when women who smoked cigarettes were voted fast: to-day, the smoking-room of the country house is not sacred to

the male sex, and 'the 'good stories' of that sometime exclusively masculine retreat are now not alone the property of the men. She has not annexed the cigar and the pipe yet—not because she lacks the will, but her physique is not yet equal to them ; but she can roll a cigarette, can take or offer a light with the most practised and inveterate smoker who ever bought a packet of Bird's Eye or Honey Dew, and she wears—think of it, O Mrs. Grundy, if, indeed, you are not dead!—a smoking-jacket.

At the more 'advanced' houses, amongst the 'smartest' sets, the women do not retire to the drawing-room at the conclusion of dinner—they sit with the men, not infrequently ; and if the usual not over-Puritanical talk that was wont to follow upon the ladies' withdrawal is not indulged in so openly, at least the conversation is sufficiently unconventional.

Slang and swearing are the commonest—in two senses—accompaniments and underlinings of the smart woman's speech : any little disappointment that would have been 'annoying' to her mother is to the modern and up-to-date woman a 'condemned nuisance,' if not more than that ; and 'damns' fall as readily from her lips as the mild 'dear me !' of a generation ago. For the first cause of this unlovely change we must look to the theatre and music-hall stages, whose women have in some few instances married the eldest sons of peers, and have succeeded to titles upon their husbands' heirship being fulfilled.

Their husbands' titles have given them rank and precedence, whose mothers toiled at the wash-tub in some public laundry, or disputed not unsuccessfully with the most foul-mouthed of Irish viragoes on the filthy stairs of some rotten tenement in the purlieus of Saint Giles's. The symmetry of their legs and the voluptuousness of their persons captivated the callow youths who night by night occupied the front rows of the stalls at the Gaiety Theatre, and who —under the well-known nickname of 'Johnnies'— fed the Sacred Lamp of Burlesque with a stream of half-guineas. These heirs to wealth and hereditary honours kept the chorus-girls and skipping-rope dancers in broughams and villas *ornées* in the classic Cyprian suburb of St. John's Wood, and, when they were more than usually foolish, married them.

Society is become, through them, quite *demi-mondaine*, and it is not uncommon to have pointed out to you in the Row titled women who have notoriously been under the protection of more than one man before they, by some lucky or unlucky chance, caught their coronets. Nearly all Society is free to-day to these whitened sepulchres; only the Queen's Court—that last bulwark of virtue and decency—holds out against them. Elsewhere they are more than tolerated; it is scarcely too much to say that they are admired by *fin-de-siècle* womanhood, who are notoriously and obviously Jesuitical. If the adaptation of their *outré*s manners is proof enough of admiration, then you shall find sufficient

warranty for this statement, for the slangy girl or young married woman is rather the rule than the exception in this year of grace, and their manners are arrived at that complexion which would make their grandmothers turn in their graves, could that cold clay become sentient again for the smallest space of time.

This decay of decency began with the advent of that loathsome amalgam of vanity and reckless extravagance in dress and speech, the Professional Beauty, whose profession first became recognised about the year 1879. You will not find that 'profession' entered under 'Trades' in the *Post-Office Directory*; but if logic ruled the world, then the shameless women whose photographs for years filled the shop-windows of town would find their trade recognised on the same commercial standing with any one of the thousand and one ways of getting a living shown in that volume. They would be on precisely the same moral level with the *quasi* milliners of London, had necessity brought about their flaunting pervasion of Society, but, seeing that merely the love of admiration and notoriety induced their careers, it is difficult to find a depth sufficiently deep for them.

But indignation is apt to melt into a scornful pity when we see the Professional Beauty of sixteen years ago, who left her husband for the questionable admiration of great Personages and the envy of London Society, a faded and struggling woman of

the world, who, without a shred of histrionic ability, has taken to the stage, relying upon the magnificence of her diamonds and the *abandon* of her dress for an applause which had never been hers for her acting or her elocution. A just resentment fades into melancholy commiseration for a woman like this, who has sunk so low that scandal can no longer harm her; who essays the *rôle* of 'beauty' when her years are rapidly totting up to fifty.

These are the tawdry careers which, appealing to woman's innate love of admiration, bid her go and do likewise. The contempt with which all right-thinking men regard the spotted and fly-blown records of the Professional Beauties is hidden from them by the glare of publicity, and vanity still bids them adventure out from the home before the eye of the world.

One does not find the New Women justified of their sex, for cosmetics have no commerce with common sense, and high heels are not conducive to lofty thinking; rouge, violet powder, tight-lacing, or an inordinate love of jewellery, are not earnest of brain-power; and yet these are the commonest adjuncts to, or characteristics of, a woman's life.

The sight of many diamonds at Kimberley impressed Lord Randolph Churchill mightily awhile ago, and the contemplation of those glittering objects of feminine adornment led to the historic pronouncement that 'whatever may have been the origin of man,' he is 'coldly convinced that woman-

kind are descended from monkeys.' However that may be, certain it is that imitation is, equally with the simians, her *forte*. Men originate almost everything; even the fashions are set and controlled by M. Worth, and women follow his lead, both dressmakers and clients.

And Woman is a consistent and inveterate *poseur*, from the time of her leaving the cradle, through girlhood, young-womanhood, and matronhood, to her last gasp. That tale of the old lady, dying from extreme age and decay of nature, who had her face rouged over against the arrival of her doctor, so that she should receive him to the best effect as she lay on her death-bed, is characteristic of her sex. Vanity, thy name is woman!

Could we but see her without her 'side'! But we cannot. All the world's a stage to her, and all the time she plays a part with an ineffable artistry of diplomacy beyond the understanding of a Richelieu or a Machiavelli. A statesman can frequently anticipate the ruses of a rival diplomat and thus check his schemes—because, being men, they both reason from a given point and can understand very accurately the workings of each other's minds; but how shall one understand woman or predicate her actions when she does not understand herself or her fellow-feminines, and acts on the moment upon unreasoned impulse and pure caprice?

You may point to this and that feminine figure which has made an equable and logical course

throughout her career, and exclaim triumphantly, 'Here is the natural woman, without guile or self-consciousness: a logical and close-reasoning creature.' Well, you are welcome to your opinion, pious, or derived from what shall seem to you as evidence sufficient for your contention. Hold it, nor inquire more narrowly, nor seek proselytes to your faith. The natural woman? My dear sir, how should your matter-of-fact and obvious nature distinguish the excellently-fashioned and well-assumed mask from the natural face? *Summum ars* — you know the rest. Ponder it, nor prate glibly of natures, good sir!

Conceive of the dreadfully unreal puppets the novelists have created and labelled with feminine names. How the machinery creaks and rattles when the puppets move! With what unreal stagger they pace the stage, and how deep below contempt is the unlikeness to womankind of their ways and words.

For the nearest approach to an adequate portrayal of the feminine character, commend me to the women of Mr. Thomas Hardy's novels, whose mental gyrations are set forth with a touch of inspiration: Bathsheba Everdene, Tess, Viviette, and the uncertain heroine of *The Trumpet Major*. Their speech has the convincing *timbre* of their sex; their walk is the true gait, not the masculine tramp that echoes through the pages of most men's novels; and how truly like nature their tongues say 'No,' when their hearts throb 'Yes, yes!'

They live, these women and girls—they breathe and palpitate with the full tide of life, and no other living novelist can so inform his feminine creations with reality.

But turn to the academic heroines of Mr. Besant. If they were not presented with the subtle suavity of his literary style, I do not know how we could endure the paragons of virtue and learning who occupy the foremost place in book after book that owns him author.

Phillis, in *The Golden Butterfly*, came as a novelty, but the type perpetuated in each succeeding novel—now as Armarel Rosevean in *Armarel of Lyonesse*; again, as Angela Messenger in *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, and so onwards—is both monotonous and earnest of a poverty of imagination. They would seem to be frankly unreal: an acknowledged Besantine convention—analogous to that early Christian art by which representations of saints, with attendant aureoles, and posing in impossible attitudes, were shown, not as portraiture, but as religious abstractions. These maidens are all sweet and severely proper; as learned as professors and as didactic as lecturers, and they have haloes heavy with gilding. ‘I cannot,’ cries the novelist, in effect, ‘show you the living woman. Consider: how unforeseen her contradictory attitudes and consistent inconsistency.’ And this, after all, is wisdom: to portray your ideal of the sweet girl graduate; to sketch woman as she

might be, rather than to fashion an inadequate presentation of woman as she is.

She will have to develop very greatly before she becomes the equal of man, either in mind or muscle; and she will have to slough some singular feminine characteristics if her incursions into masculine walks of life are to be continued. At present she carries her purse in her hand along the most crowded streets, at the imminent risk of its being snatched away. Ask her why she does this, and she will tell you that she has no pockets, or that they are difficult to reach, or else that they are too easily reached by pickpockets. It never occurs to her that the devising of new pockets comes within the range of the dressmaker's craft. Not that it matters much; for the purse-snatcher obtains little result for his pains, and, beyond some postage-stamps, half a dozen visiting-cards, a packet of needles, and a few coppers, his enterprise usually goes unrewarded.

Woman does not date her correspondence. She has no 'views' on the subject; she simply forgets. Sometimes, indeed, she will head her letters with the day of the week; but, as the weeks slip by, a letter written on any 'Wednesday' becomes rather vague in date.

Also, it is notorious that the gist of a woman's letter, the real reason of its being written, appears in a postscript.

Again, it surely does not behove the New Woman to throng the streets in front of the

establishments of Mr. Peter Robinson or Madame Louise, in admiring ecstasies over novel cuts and colours, bows and bonnets, and all the feminine accoutrements of fashion. Conceive of men crowding the tailors' and the haberdashers' in like manner, and taking equal delight in 'shopping!' This last occupation, or rather pastime, of women is a certain sign of mental inferiority. A woman will spend a whole day 'shopping'—that is to say, in the inspection of goods she does not want and has no intention of buying—and will return home when day is done and count her time well and profitably spent. 'Shopping,' as apart from any idea of purchasing, is a recognised form of feminine recreation, as tradesfolk know to their cost. Happy the shopkeeper whose trade does not lend itself to 'shopping,' but wretched is he where the vice is rampant. For woman is pitiless and exacting, impervious either to criticism, sarcasm, irony, or innuendo, on occasion; and the more logical the man with whom she contends, so much the more baffling is she to him. So, short of plain and possibly offensive speech (for none so readily or more causelessly offended than your 'shopper'), the unhappy victims of this mania have no redress, but must continue to heap their counters with bales of cloth and rolls of silk for due examination, and must exhibit a Christian patience and forbearance when the 'shopper' departs without purchasing or apologising.

No mere man could do this, for such assurance could only proceed from the opposite sex.

A perusal of the advertisement sheets which form the bulk of women's newspapers and magazines makes for disillusionment and depression ; and you would need but little excuse if, after a course of these appeals to feminine love of adornment, you rose from it with a settled conviction that Woman is a Work of Art, padded here, pinched in there, painted, dyed, and carefully made up in every particular. He was, indeed, a philosopher worthy the name (or perhaps it was a more than usually candid woman!) who said that none of the consolations of religion or any pious ecstasies could equal the profound and solemn joy which accompanies a woman's conviction of her being well dressed and the envy of her fellows.

Here, indeed, is another striking difference between the sexes. A man is happiest when circumstances permit him to don the old clothes which for years have been his only wear in leisure hours : he would wear them while out and about on his business did the *convenances* permit—so easy and comfortable is the old hat ; so well adapted by long use is the old jacket to the form ; so easy the bagged and misshapen trousers. But, alas ! this may not be, for the world judges a man by his appearance, and it simply does not pay to appear in public otherwise than 'well dressed.' For dukes and millionaires 'tis another matter ; they can afford to be 'shabby' and

comfortable, and certainly, whether they manage to attain comfort or not, they generally contrive to appear ill-dressed and dowdy.

Woman is altogether different from and inferior to man: narrow-chested, wide-hipped, ill-proportioned, and endowed with a lesser quantity of brains than the male sex. She will, when sufficiently open to conviction, allow that, mentally, she is not so well equipped as man, but gives herself away altogether in insisting upon the 'instinct' that takes the place of reason in her sex; thereby tacitly placing herself on a level with other creatures—like the dog or cat—who act upon 'instinct' rather than upon reasoning powers. 'A woman's reason' is a notoriously inadequate mental process; and, having once arrived at a conviction or a determination on any subject, it is of no use attempting to argue her out of it. That is widely acknowledged by the popular saying that 'it is useless to argue with a woman.'

('If she will, she will, and there's an end on't :
If she won't, she won't, depend on't.')

These qualifications, limitations, or defects, as you may variously call them, according to your leanings, explain in great measure the reason why the Liberal and Radical parties in politics hesitate to give women the Parliamentary franchise. Party wirepullers are well aware, putting on one side the small but noisy section of unsexed females who

clamour to be in the forefront of all political and social revolutions, that the great majority of women are, by nature and tradition, Tories of the most thorough-going type. They know, also, how hopeless it would be to drive new convictions into their heads, and so, being reasoning creatures, they have hitherto declined to extend the franchise to the sex which would at once swamp their parties throughout the country. The Conservative party, on the other hand, have for some time recognised how useful the women would be in furthering their principles and putting a needful skid upon the wheels of Radical 'movements ;' and they have voted in favour of Woman Suffrage when that question has come up for discussion from time to time. The wonderful success of the Primrose League, due almost entirely to the personal initiative and enthusiasm of the Dames, opened the eyes of the party to the value of woman as a factor in politics, and if ever she obtains her vote the reform will be the work of the Conservatives. Thus do party needs negative convictions on either side of the House ; for what, indeed, are convictions when weighed in the balance against self-interest ?

It is a notorious fact among artists and physiologists that the Perfect Woman is of more rare occurrence than the Perfect Man ; that it is a matter of extreme difficulty to find a woman whose body is symmetrical and well knit in all its parts. A painter of the nude works, of necessity,

from several models, selecting one for her shapely arms, another for her neck, and so on ; and so the final work of art in sculpture or painting is always eclectic, and never a portraiture of one woman.

And yet man has always been ready to do battle for her, and to dare death and the Devil himself for her favour. She has, too, continually presumed upon her influence, like the fair lady in the days of chivalry, who threw her glove among the lions of an arena and boasted that her knight would retrieve it for her sake. She did not overrate his courage, but she strained his devotion beyond its strength ; for, leaping among the wild beasts, the brave man picked up the glove, and, coming back from the jaws of death, flung it in the woman's face.

But will men dare the death and slit one another's weasands for the possession of the New Woman as they have done for the women of the past ? I think not. The contempt and incredulity of one sex for the judgment and discrimination of the other, which is chiefly a modern growth induced by woman's arrogance, is not compatible with suit and service ; and, in truth, the enmity between man and woman, shadowed forth in Genesis, is having another lease of life, owing to the fatuous females who cry to-day upon the house-tops.

Mr. Romanes wants us to 'give her the apple, and let us see what comes of it.' Heaven forbid : let her pluck it if she has the courage and the power, but let us not earn our own condemnation

by inviting her to do so. He is of opinion that 'the days are past when any enlightened man ought seriously to suppose that, in now again reaching forth her hand to eat of the tree of knowledge, woman is preparing for the human race a second Fall.' There may be two opinions on this head. Women may occasionally surpass in learning the Senior Wrangler of as good a year as was ever known; they may exercise their brains and their muscles to their utmost tension; but let them not in those cases exercise the natural function of woman and bring children into the world. For nature, which never contemplated the production of a learned or a muscular woman, will be revenged upon her offspring, and the New Woman, if a mother at all, will be the mother of a New Man, as different, indeed, from the present race as possible, but *how* different the clamorous females of to-day cannot suspect, or surely they would at once renounce the platform and their prospects of the tribune

But it is not to be supposed that even the prospect of peopling the world with stunted and hydrocephalic children will deter the modern woman from her path, even though her modernity lead to the degradation and ultimate extinction of the race. She will raise the old, half-humorous query once more: 'Why trouble about posterity; what has posterity done for us?' and thus go her triumphant gait heedless of the second and greater Fall she is preparing for mankind.



II.—THE DRESS REFORMERS.

‘I do not like the fashion of your garments—you will say, they are Persian attire, but let them be changed.’—*King Lear*.

MODERN dress-reform crusades have ever been allied with womanly revolts against man’s authority. They proceeded originally from that fount of vulgarity, that never-failing source of offence—America. [In the United States, that ineffable land of wooden nutmegs and timber hams, of strange religions, of jerrymandering and unscrupulous log-rolling, the Prophet Bloomer first arose, and, discarding the feminine skirt, stood forth, unashamed and blatant, in trousers!] The wrath of the Bloomers (as the followers of the Prophet were

termed) was calculated to disestablish at once and for ever the skirts and frocks, the gowns and miscellaneous feminine fripperies, that had obtained throughout the centuries; and they conceived that with the abolition of skirts the long-sustained supremacy of man was also to disappear, even as the walls of Jericho fell before the trumpet-sound of the Lord's own people. For these enthusiasts were no cooing doves, but rather shrieking cats, and they were both abusive and overweening. No more should 'tempestuous petticoats' inspire a Herrick to dainty verse, but the woman of the immediate future should move majestically through the wondering continents of the Old World and the New with manly strides in place of the feminine mincing gait induced by clinging draperies. Away Erato and your sister Muses—if, indeed, your susceptibilities would have allowed your remaining to behold the spectacle! For really, that must have been a 'sight for sore eyes'—to adopt the expression of the period—the too-convincing vision of a middle-aged woman, proof against ridicule, consumed with all seriousness and an ineffable zeal for converting all and sundry to her peculiar views in the matter of a becoming and convenient attire. And never was prophet less justified of his country than the Bloomer seer of hers; for nakedness, even to undraped piano-legs, was then a reproach in the country of the Stars and Stripes, where legs are not legs, an't please you, but 'extremities' or 'limbs;'

where trousers are neither more than 'pantaloons' nor less than 'continuations.' In that Land of Freedom, where one would have outraged all modesty by the merest mention of legs or feet—these last indispensable adjuncts being generally known as 'pedal extremities'—it surely was illogical in the highest degree that women should wear a species of trouser, and thereby proclaim the indelicate (!) fact to all the world of their possession of legs. Truly Pudicitia is as American a goddess as Mammon is a god!

For the Bloomer costume was nothing else but a travesty of male attire. Aggressiveness is inseparable, it would seem, from all new ideas, and the minor prophets of Bloomerism were aggressive enough, in all conscience. They were not content with wearing the breeches in the literal sense: they sought to convert all womankind to their faith by the writing of pamphlets and the making of speeches on public platforms. Mrs. Ann Bloomer was their fount of inspiration. She it was who introduced the craze to America in 1849. Two years later it had crossed the herring-pond, and that *Annus Mirabilis*, the year of the Great Exhibition, witnessed a few of its enthusiasts—beldams in breeches—clad in this hybrid garb, walking in London streets. But women refused to be converted in any large numbers, and only a few more than usually impudent females went so far as to back their views by wearing the badges of the cult in public.

But although so few Englishwomen were converted to the new dress, and though fewer still had the courage to wear it, the Bloomer agitation was largely noticed in the papers and by the satirists of the time. It was noticed, indeed, in a manner entirely disproportioned to its real import, and the humorous papers, the ballad-mongers, and innumerable private witlings, had their fling at the follies of these early dress-reformers. The Bloomers—unlovely name!—held meetings in London, attended, it must be owned, by crowds of ribald unbelievers; and they even went to the length of holding a 'Bloomer Ball,' a grotesque idea hailed with delight by a roaring crowd which assembled 'after the ball,' and showed its prejudices by hooting the ridiculous women who had come attired in jackets and trousers like those of the Turk. No Turk, indeed, so unspeakable as they. But the crowd did not stop at this point. They had brought dead cats, decayed cabbages, rotten eggs, and all imaginable articles of offence with which to point their wit, and they used them freely, not only upon the women, but also upon the men who accompanied them. For discrimination was not easy between the sexes in the badly lit streets, when both wore breeches, and at a time when men went generally clean-shaven; and so the rightfully breeched were as despitefully used as the usurpers of man's distinctive dress.

And so Bloomerism languished awhile and presently died out, but not before a vast amount had

been written and printed in its praise or abuse. The satirical effusions which owe their origin to this mania are none of them remarkable for reticence or delicacy. Indeed, the subject did not allow of this last quality, and the broad-sheet verses issued from the purlieus of Drury Lane by the successors of Catnach are, some of them, very frank. Perhaps the best and most quotable is the broad-sheet, *I'll be a Bloomer*. The writer, not a literary man by any means, starts off at score, and his first verses, if models neither of taste, rhyme, nor rhythm, are vigorous. It is when the inspiration runs dry, and he relies upon a slogging industry with which to eke out his broad-sheet, that exhaustion becomes evident.

I'LL BE A BLOOMER.

Listen, females all,
No matter what your trade is,
Old Nick is in the girls,
The Devil's in the ladies !
Married men may weep,
And tumble in the ditches,
Since women are resolved
To wear the shirt and breeches.

Ladies do declare
A change should have been sooner,
The women, one and all,
Are going to join the Bloomers.
Prince Albert and the Queen
Had such a jolly row, sirs ;
She threw off stays and put
On waistcoat, coat, and trousers.



THE BLOOMER
COSTUME, 1851.

g. harper

It will be fun to see
Ladies, possessed of riches,
Strutting up and down
In Wellingtons and breeches.
Bloomers are funny folks,
No ladies can be faster :
They say 'tis almost time
That petticoats were master.

They will not governed be
By peelers, snobs, or proctors,
But take up their degree
As councillors and doctors.
No bustles will they wear,
Nor stocks, depend upon it ;
But jerry hats and caps
Instead of dandy bonnet.

Trousers to their knees,
And whiskers round their faces ;
A watch-chain in their fob,
And a pair of leather braces.
The tailors must be sharp
In making noble stitches,
And clap their burning goose
Upon the ladies' breeches.

Their pretty fingers will
Be just as sore as mutton
Till they have found the way
Their trousers to unbutton.
The Bloomers all declare
That men are sad deceivers ;
They'll take a turn, and be
Prigs, dustmen, and coalheavers—
Members of Parliament,
And make such jolly fusses ;
Cobble up old ladies' shoes ;
Drive cabs and omnibuses.

Their husbands they will wop,
 And squander all their riches ;
 Make them nurse the kids
 And wash their shirts and breeches.
 If men should say a word,
 There'd be a jolly row, sirs !
 Their wives would make them sweat
 And beat them with their trousers.

The world's turned upside down ;
 The ladies will be tailors,
 And serve Old England's Queen
 As soldiers and as sailors.
 Won't they look funny when
 The seas are getting lumpy,
 Or when they ride astride
 Upon an Irish donkey ?

The ladies will be right ;
 Their husbands will be undone,
 Since Bloomers have arrived
 To teach the folks of London—
 The females all I mean—
 How to lay out their riches
 In Yankee-Doodle-dooos
 And a stunning pair of breeches.

Female apparel now
 Is gone to pot, I vow, sirs,
 And ladies will be fined
 Who *don't* wear coats and trousers ;
 Blucher boots and hats,
 And shirts with handsome stitches,—
 Oh, dear ! what shall we do
 When women wear the breeches ?

Now some will wear smock-frocks
 And hobnail shoes, I vow, sirs ;
 - Jenny, Bet, and Sal,
 Cock'd hat and woollen trousers.

Yankee-Doodle-doo,
 Rolling in the ditches ;
Married men prepare
 To buy the women breeches !

Punch had, among other Bloomer skits, the following rather good example :—

MRS. GRUNDY ON BLOOMERISM.

Hoity-toity!—don't tell me about the nasty stupid fashion !
Stuff and nonsense!—the idea's enough to put one in a passion.
I'd allow no such high jinkses, if I was the creatures' parent.
'Bloomers' are they—forward minxes ? I soon Bloomer 'em, I warrant.
I've no patience nor forbearance with 'em—scornin' them as bore 'em ;
What ! they can't dress like their mothers was content to dress before 'em,—
Wearing what-d'ye-call'ems—Gracious ! brass itself ain't half so brazen ;
Why, they must look more audacious than that what's-a-name—
 Amazon !
Ha ! they'll smoke tobacco next, and take their thimblefuls of brandy,
Bringing shame upon their sex, by aping of the jack-a-dandy.
Yes ; and then you'll have them shortly showing off their bold bare faces,
Prancing all so pert and portly at their Derbys and their races.
Oh ! when once they have begun, there's none can say where they'll be stopping—
Out they'll go with dog and gun ; perhaps a-shooting and a-popping.
Aye ! and like as not, you'll see, if you've a Bloomer for your daughter,
Her ladyship, so fine and free, a-pulling matches on the water ;
Sitting in a pottus tap, a-talking politics and jawing ;
Or else a-reading *Punch*, mayhap, and hee-heeing and haw-hawing.

I can't a-bear such flighty ways—I can't abide such flaunty tastes.

And so they must leave off their stays, to show their dainty shapes and waistses /

I'd not have my feet filagreed, for ever so, like these young women.

No ; you won't see *me*, I'll be bound, dressed half-and-half, as a young feller ;

I'll stick to my old shawl and gownd, my pattens, and my umbereller.

The Bloomer agitation was but the beginning of a series of crazes for the reform of women's dress, and the 'Girl of the Period' *furore* succeeded it, after an interval of several years. True, the Girl of the Period was scarcely a dress-reformer, but her dress and manners were sufficiently pronounced, and certainly her vulgarity could not have been surpassed by the most fat and blowzy Bloomer that ever held forth upon a public platform.

To Mrs. Lynn Linton belongs the honour of having discovered the Girl, and she communicated her discovery to the *Saturday Review* in 1868. This it was that gave some point to the saying that the Girl of the Period was but the Girl of a Periodical.

And certainly the vulgarity of the Girl of the Period was extremely pronounced. It was a vulgarity that showed itself in bustles and paniers ; the 'Grecian Bend ;' skirts frilled and flounced and hung about with ridiculous festoons, and short enough to display her intolerable Balmoral boots. An absurdly inadequate 'Rink' hat rendered her chignon all the

more obvious, and —. But enough! The Man of the Period was her equal in absurdity. He cultivated a hateful affectation of lassitude and indifference; he affected a peculiarly odious drawl; and he taxed his mind with an effort to sustain a constantly *nil admirari* attitude toward things the most admirable and happenings the most startling. He wore the most ridiculous fashion of whiskers, compared with which the perennial 'mutton-chop' and the bearded chin and clean-shaven upper lip of the Dissenter or typical grocer are things of beauty and a satisfaction to the æsthetic sense.

This fashion was the 'Piccadilly-weeper' variety of adornment, known at this day—chiefly owing to Sothern's impersonation of a contemporary lisping fop—as the 'Dundreary.' This creature was a fitting mate to the Girl of the Period. He married her, and the most obvious results are the 'Gaiety Johnnies,' the 'mashers,' and the 'chappies' of to-day, whose retreating chins and foreheads afford subjects for the sad contemplation of philosophers—to whom we will leave them.

As for their female offspring, they are, doubtless, the 'Lotties and Totties' of Mrs. Lynn Linton's loathing, who smoke cigarettes and ape the dress and deportment of the ladies of the Alhambra or the Empire promenades.

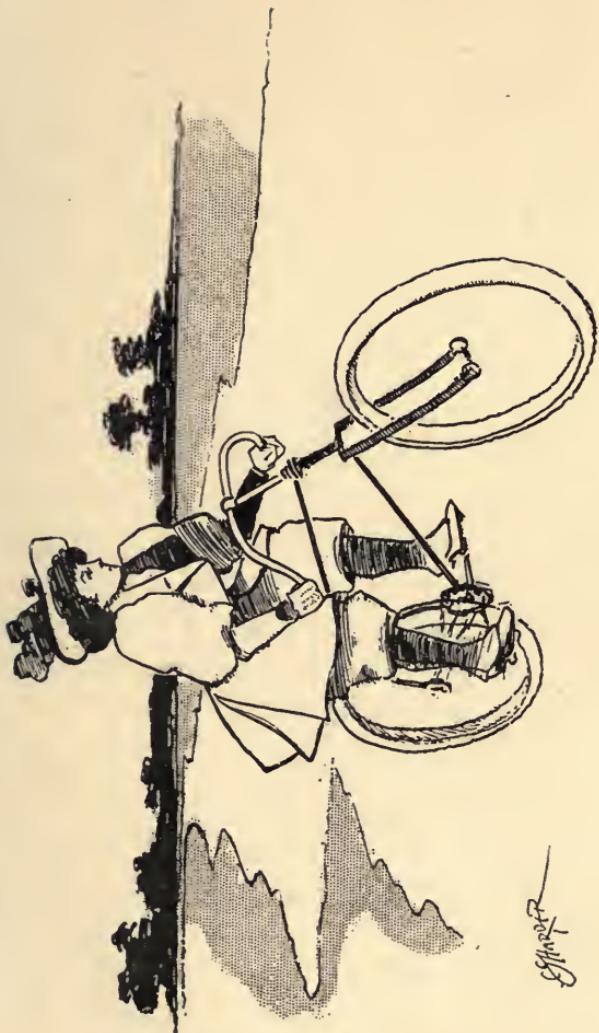
It is at once singular and amusing to notice how surely all women's dress-reform agitations move in the same groove—that of a more or less close

imitation of man's attire. Even fashions which are not ostensible 'reforms' have a decided tendency to make for masculinity. The girls who, some few years since, cut their hair short—like the boys ; who wore bowler hats, shirt-fronts, men's collars and neckties ; who carried walking-sticks, or that extraordinary combination of walking-stick and sunshade known facetiously as a 'husband-beater ;' who affected tailor-made frocks, donned man-like jackets, and adopted a masculine gait, were not accredited reformers with a Mission, but they showed, excellently well, the spirit of the age, and if they were wanting in thoroughness, why, Lady Harberton, with her 'divided skirts,' was a very Strafford for thoroughness in her particular line.

Divided skirts were introduced to the notice of the public some ten years ago by Viscountess Harberton and a Society of Dress Reformers, calling themselves, possibly on *lucus a non lucendo* principles, first a 'National' Society, and at a later period arrogating the title of 'Rational.' It may seem matter for ridicule that an obscure coterie of grandams should adopt such a grandiose title as the first, or that they should, by using the 'Rational' epithet, be convicted of allowing the inference that they considered every woman irrational who did not adhere to their principles ; but, like all 'reformers,' they were without humour and consumed with a deadly earnestness. They (unlike the rest of the world) saw nothing for laughter in the public dis-



THE RATIONAL
DRESS.



cussions which they initiated, by which they sought to show that corsets were not only useless but harmful, and that the petticoat might advantageously be discarded for trousers worn underneath an ordinary skirt, somewhat after the fashion that obtains in riding costumes.

But, for all the pother anent divided skirts, they did not catch on; and a newer rival, another variety of 'Rational Dress,' now rules the field, the camp, the grove, but more especially the road. For the popular and widespread pastime of cycling has given this newest craze a very much better chance than ever the Bloomer heresy or the original Divided Skirt frenzy obtained; and it is not too much to say that, if the cycle had not been so democratic a plaything, this latest experiment in dress reform would have been but little heard of. Rational Dress, as seen on the flying females who pedal down the roads to-day, is only Bloomerism with a difference. That is to say, the legs are clothed in roomy knickerbockers down to the knees, and encased in cloth gaiters for the rest, buttoned down to the ankles. These in place of the Turk-like trousers, tied round the ankles and finished off with frills, of over forty years ago. As for the attenuated skirts of the Prophet Bloomer, Rational Dress replaces them with a species of frantic frock-coat, spreading as to its ample skirts, but tightened round the waist. A 'Robin Hood' hat, even as in the bygone years, crowns this confection; and,

really, the parallels between old-time schismatics and the modern revolting daughters are wonderfully close. Everything recurs in this world in cycles of longer or shorter duration. The whirligig of time may be uncertain in its revolutions, but it performs the allotted round at last ; and so surely as yesterday's sun will reappear to-morrow, as certainly will the crinolines, the chignons, and the Bloomer vagaries of yester-year recur. You may call the recurrent fashions by newer names, but, by any name they take, they remain practically the same. The farthingale of Queen Bess's time is the crinoline of the Middle Victorian period, and 'came in' once more as the 'full skirt' of some seasons since. The chignon is resurrected as the 'Brighton Bun,' and is as objectionable in its reincarnation as it was in its previous existence ; and we have already seen that Rational Dress, Divided Skirts, and the Bloomer costume are but different titles for one fad. The very latest development is not pretty : but there ! 'tis 'pretty Fanny's way,' and so an end to all discussion.

III.—WOMAN IN ART, LITERATURE, POLITICS, AND SOCIAL POLITY.

IN these days, when women begin to talk of their Work with all the zeal and religious fervour that characterises the attitude of the savage towards his fetish, it behoves us to inquire what that Work may be which arouses so much enthusiasm and is the cause of the cool insolence which is becoming more and more the note of the New Woman. A very little inquiry soon convinces the seeker after the true inwardness of modern fads and fancies that Woman's Work—so to spell it in capitals, in the manner dear to the hearts of the unsexed men and women who reckon Adam a humbug and Eve the most despitefully-entreated of her adorable sex—has nothing to do with the up-bringing of children or the management of the home. Those traditional duties are nothing less, if you please, than the slavery which man's tyranny has imposed upon the physically weaker sex, and are not worthy of sharing the aristocratic prominence of capital letters which the desultory following of arts

and sciences has arrogated. Modern *doctrinaires* preach heresies which would make miserable that very strong man, St. Paul, who constantly enjoined woman to silence and submission. *Place aux dames* is the century-end watchword, in a sense very different from the distinguished consideration which the dames of years bygone received. *Place aux dames* is all very well, as some one has somewhere said—but then, dames in their place, which, with all possible deference to the femininely-influenced philosophers of to-day, is not in politics, nor in any arts or sciences whatever.

Those who so blithely advocate the throwing open of the professions to woman, and invite her to work with them, side by side, in works of practical philanthropy, base their arguments on false premises. [They assume, at starting, that womankind has been throughout the centuries in an arrested condition. Her mental and bodily growth has, they say, been retarded by cunningly-devised restrictions; she has not been permitted to develop or to reach maturity—she is, in short, according to these views, undeveloped man, rather than a separate and fully developed sex. Those views are, of course, merely fallacies of the most unstable kind. Woman's place and functions have been definitely fixed for her by nature, and those functions and that place are to be the handmaid of man (or the handmatron if you like it better), and to be the mother of his children; and her place is the home.] Her physical

and mental limitations are subtly contrived by nature to keep woman in the home and engrossed in domestic matters; and, really, if abuse is needed at all, man does not deserve it, but to nature belongs the epithet of tyrant, if an owner must be found for the unenviable distinction.

Woman is essentially narrow-minded and individualistic. Her time has ever been fleeted in working for the individual, and the community would be badly off at this day had not the State been thoroughly masculine for a time that goes back beyond the historians into the regions of myths and fairy tales. Small brains cannot engender great thoughts; which is but another way of saying that woman's brain is less than man's. It is only recently that woman has organized her forces at all, and she would not have done so, even now, had she not a plentiful lack of anything to occupy her thoughts withal in these days of the subdivision of labour and of extended luxury. And so, with plenty of time to spare, she begins to ask if there is nothing that becomes her better than the 'suckling of fools and the chronicling of small beer.' But although Carlyle said in his wrath that men and women were mostly fools, yet there be children nourished with nature's food who have developed a certain force of intellect; and as for the chronicles of small beer, gossip and scandal-mongering have never been compulsory in women, but only unwelcome features of their nature. Idleness,

luxury, and the supreme consideration with which even the most foolish feminine manifestations have been received, have always been fruitful sources of mischief, and this by-past consideration has favoured the development of vanity and the growth of the feminine Ego to its present proportions.

Woman never becomes more than an ineffectual amateur in all the careers she enters. Her practice in art and literature inevitably debases art and letters, for she is a copyist at most. In literature she never originates, but appropriates and assimilates men's thoughts, and in the transcription of those thoughts seldom rises above the use of *clichés*.
But the Modern Woman desires most ardently to enter those spheres of mental and technical activity, undeterred by any disheartening doubts of her fitness for letters or government, of her capacity for organizing or originating. She points triumphantly for confirmation of her sex's endowments to the lives and works of the George Eliots, the Harriet Martineaus, the Elizabeth Frys, the Angelica Kauffmanns, or the women of the French political salons; but she does not stop to consider that those distinguished women succeeded not because, but in spite of, their sex, and that few of the women who have made what the world terms successful careers had any of the more gracious feminine characteristics beyond their merely physiological attributes. Many of them were unsexed creatures whose womanhood was an accident of their birth.

The rush of women into the artistic and literary professions has always had a singularly ill effect upon technique, for the woman's mind is normally incapable of rising to an appreciation of the possibilities of any medium. They have not even a glimmering perception of style, and would as cheerfully (if not, indeed, with greater readiness) acclaim Dagonet a poet as they would the Swan of Avon, although the gulf that divides Shakespeare from Mr. G. R. Sims is not only one formed by lapse of the centuries : to them the works of Miss Braddon appear as the ultimate expression of the passions, and [they would as readily label a painting by Velasquez 'nice' as they would call the productions of Mr. Dudley Hardy 'awfully jolly.' Subject rather than execution wins their admiration, and the nerveless handling of a painting whose subject appeals to their imagination wins their praise while the highest attainments of technique are disregarded.] For them does Mr. W. P. Frith paint the *Derby Day* and *So Clean*; for their delight are the 'dog and dolly' pictures of Mr. Burton Barber, the *Can 'oo Talk?* the 'peep-bo' and 'pussy-cat' stories in paint contrived ; and for their ultimate satisfaction are they reproduced as coloured supplements in the summer and Christmas numbers of the illustrated papers.

You may count distinguished women artists upon the fingers of your hands, with some fingers to spare, and some of these achieved their fame by reason of

their womanhood, rather than the excellence of their art. Angelica Kauffmann is a notable example. She attained the unique position of a female Royal Academician through Reynolds's infatuation : she painted portraits and classical compositions innumerable, but the portraits are poor and her classicism the most futile and emasculate. Literature, too—although more women have made reputations with the pen than the brush—can show but a very small proportion of feminine genius ; and (although the ultimate verdict of the critics may yet depose these) [Charlotte Brontë, Fanny Burney, and George Eliot are the most outstanding names in this department. These few names compare with an intolerable deal of mediocrity, cosseted and sheltered from the adverse winds of criticism in its little day ; but yet so constitutionally weak that it has withered and died out of all knowledge.] The women who, like George Eliot, and her modern successor, Mrs. Humphry Ward, adventure into ethical novels, are too excruciatingly serious and possessed with too solemn a conviction of their infallibility for much patient endurance ; and really, when one remembers the spectacle of G. H. Lewis truckling to the critics, intriguing for favourable reviews, and endeavouring to stultify editors for the sake of his George Eliot, in order that no breath of adverse criticism and no wholesome wind from the outer world should come to dispel her colossal conceit, we obtain a curious peep into the methods by which the feminine Ego

is nourished. But the spectacle is no less pitiful than strange.

It is not often, however, that women writers present us with philosophical treatises in the guise of novels. Their high-water mark of workmanship is the *Family Herald* type of story-telling, even as crystoleum-painting and macramé-work exhaust the energies and imagination of the majority of women 'art' workers. What, also, is to say of the lady-novelists' heroes, of god-like grace and the mental attributes of the complete prig? What but that if we collate the masculine characters of even the better-known, and presumably less foolish, feminine novels, we shall find woman's ideal in man to be the sybaritic Guardsman, the loathly, languorous Apollos who recline on 'divans,' smoke impossibly fragrant cigarettes, gossip about their *affaires du cœur*, and wave 'jewelled fingers'—repellent combinations of braggart, prig, and knight-errant, with the thews and sinews of a Samson and the morals of a mudlark.

Philanthropy is a field upon which the modern woman enters with an enthusiasm that, unfortunately, is very much greater than her sense. Her care is for the individual, and she it is who encourages indiscriminate almsgiving, but cannot understand the practical philanthropy which compels men to work for a wage, or organizes vast schemes of relief works. Her whole nature is individualistic, and we would not have it otherwise, for it has, in many

instances of womanly women, made homes happy and comfortable, and nerved men in the larger philanthropy which succours without pauperising thousands. But she has no business outside the home.

Philanthropy, of sorts, we have always with us, and the undeserving need never lack shelter and support in a disgraceful idleness while the tender-hearted or the hysterical amateur relieving-officers are permitted to make fools of themselves, and rogues and vagabonds of the lazy wastrels who will never do an honest day's work so long as a subsistence is to be got by begging. The fashionable occupation of 'slumming' made many more paupers than it relieved, and the 'Darkest England' cry of Mr. William Booth, whom foolish folk call by the title of 'General' he arrogates, is the most notorious exhibition of sentimentalism in recent years. That appeal to the charitable and pitiful folks of England was, like the Salvation Army itself, engineered by the late Mrs. Catherine Booth, and it captured many thousands of pounds wherewith to succour the unfit, the criminal, the unwashed; the very scum and dregs of the race whom merciless Nature, cruel to be kind, had doomed to early extinction. But mouthing and tearful sentimentality has interfered with beneficent natural processes, and the depraved and ineffectual are helped to a longer term of existence, that they may transmit their bodily and mental diseases to another generation, and so foul

the blood and stunt the growth of the nation in years to come.

Science, anthropology, and economics have no meaning for the femininely-influenced founders of Salvation Army doss-houses: the body politic—society, in the larger sense—national life, are phrases that convey no meaning to the sobbing philanthropists to whom the welfare of the dosser is a creed and Darwinian theories rank blasphemy.

The tendency of sentimental philanthropy is to relieve all alike from the consequences of their misdeeds, and to preserve the worst and the *unfittest*, and to enable the worst to compete at an advantage with the best, and to freely propagate its rickety kind. Philanthropy of this pernicious sort is essentially sentimental and feminine.

But the most disastrous interference, up to the present, of sentimental fanatics—women and femininely-influenced men—has been their successful campaign against those beneficent Acts of Parliament, the Contagious Diseases Acts, framed from time to time for the protection of Her Majesty's forces of the Army and Navy.

Those Acts, applied to the garrison towns and the dockyard towns of Aldershot, Chatham, Plymouth, Dover, Canterbury, Windsor, Southampton, and others, provided for the registration and compulsory periodical medical examination of the [public women who infest the streets of those places. Horrible diseases, spread by these abandoned

creatures, decimated the regiments and the crews of the ships that put in at their ports ; and thus, through them, the blood of future generations was poisoned and contaminated. The women whose depravity and disease spread foul disorders among not only the soldiers and sailors, but also amongst the civil populations of these garrison towns, were free, before the application of the C. D. Acts, to ply their trade no matter what might be their bodily condition ; but the operation of those measures, at first providing for voluntary inspection and examination, and afterwards making those precautions compulsory, rendered it a criminal offence for a woman registered by the police to have intercourse with men while knowing that she was suffering from disease. Such an offence, or the offence of not presenting themselves at the examining officer's station at the fortnightly period prescribed by the Acts, rendered women of this class liable to imprisonment. If at these examinations a woman was found to be healthy, a certificate was given her ; if the medical officer certified her to be diseased, she was taken by compulsion to hospital, and detained there until recovery.

Plymouth, Aldershot, and Chatham, in especial, were in a shocking condition before the Acts came into force ; but during the years in which they were administered by the police, a diminution of disease by more than one-half was seen in the Army and Navy, and the registration of the women led to

a very great falling-off of the numbers who obtained so shameful a living. Evidence given before the Royal Commission upon the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1872 proved this beyond question, and also proved that these women not only had no objection to the medical examinations, but regarded them and the hospitals as very great benefits.

The shocking revelations as to the social condition of Plymouth, Devonport, and Stonehouse, afforded by the evidence of the police, cannot be more than hinted at in this place. It is sufficient to say that over 2000 women were put upon the registers, either as occasionally or habitually living a loose life, and that all classes were to be found in these documents, but especially girls employed behind the counters of shops during the day. The police seem everywhere to have been conscientious in the execution of their duty, and to have performed ungrateful and delicate tasks with great discretion. The registers were private and strictly confidential official documents, and both the medical examinations and the police visits to suspected houses were conducted with all possible secrecy, the police in the latter case being plain-clothes men, and not readily to be identified by the public.

And yet, in spite of the very evident benefits derived from the Acts and deposed to before the Commission by such unimpeachable authorities as the foremost medical officers of the Army and Navy, commanding officers, clergymen of the Established

Church, Wesleyan ministers, the entire medical and nursing staffs of hospitals, and the police authorities themselves, these Acts were repealed, in submission to the outcries of the 'mules and barren women,' who, headed by the rancorous Mrs. Josephine Butler and the gushing sentimentalists from the religio-radical benches of the House of Commons, called public meetings, and shrieked and raved upon platforms throughout the country: a chorus of shocked spinsters and 'pure' men, whose advocacy of what they called, forsooth, 'the liberty of the subject' and the abolition of what they falsely termed the 'State licensing of vice,' has resulted in a liberty accorded these women to spread disease far and wide.

The nation, the men of Army and Navy, have reason abundant to curse the sentimental women, the maiden aunts, the *religieuses*, the gorgons of a mistaken propriety and a peculiarly harmful prudery, whose interference with affairs which they were not competent to direct has wrought such untoward results.

This is what a writer says in the *Westminster Review*: 'The struggle for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts was an ordeal such as men have never been obliged to undergo. It involved not merely that women should speak at public meetings, which was a great innovation, but that they should discuss the most painful of all subjects, upon which, up to that time, even men had not



dared to open their mouths. Yet so nobly did the women bear their part all through those terrible years of trial, that they raised a spirit of indignation which swept away the Acts, but never, by word or deed, did they deservedly incur reproach themselves.'

Rubbish, every word of it! The women who spoke upon these painful subjects were under no compulsion, legal or moral, to initiate or take part in the frenzy of wrong-headed emotion, which was exhibited upon public platforms to the dismay and disgust of all right-thinking men and women. It cannot be conceded that the subject was painful to these persons, nor can the statement be allowed to go unchallenged that they did not deserve reproach. Reproach of the most bitter kind was and is deserved by the prejudiced persons who distorted facts and gladly relied upon any hearsay evidence that would seem to square with their theories, and even refused to admit the weight of incontrovertible statistics produced against their rash and windy statements. The examinations of Mrs. Josephine Butler* and of those two ridiculous persons, the Unitarian pastor from Southampton and his wife,

* 'She kept no notes or records. She desired to forget what she had done.

'Many ladies try to benefit these women in different ways; not many receive them into their houses.

'A sufficient number of private persons doing this work would obviate the necessity for Government machinery.

'Witness would wish to keep clear of Government aid, because

Mr. and Mrs. Kell, are damning indictments of their good faith and good sense. These are types of women and womanish men who take delight in the investigation of pruriency, whose noses are in every cesspool and their hands in the nearest muck-heap.

Government would then assume a right to control. The work was too delicate for the State to meddle with.

‘She knew nothing of the garrison towns: knew most of the north: declined to give an opinion as to the operation of the Acts: had no interest in them.

‘Reminded that she had given her opinion pretty freely at meetings and in publications, the witness stated that that was merely in illustration of her views on the constitutional and moral part of the subject.

‘No alteration in the Acts could reconcile her to them. She would be satisfied with nothing but entire repeal.

‘Witness remembered addressing the Secretary at War with reference to a girl named Hagar. She thought her letter to Mr. Cardwell was a private one. She had apologised to Mr. Cardwell for having written in warmth of feeling.

‘She was aware that therein she made a charge of gross misconduct against a policeman: was not satisfied that she had been entirely mistaken. She reported the case on the authority of Mr. and Mrs. Heritage and of the mother and girl.

‘She was aware that the Secretary of State ordered an inquiry, and that the inspector of hospitals came to the conclusion that there was not a word of truth in what the woman and girl said. She believed the woman and girl in preference to Dr. Sloggett. She did not know the nature of the evidence on which Dr. Sloggett reported to the Secretary of State, and was still disposed to believe the woman and girl.

‘Her speeches had often been incorrectly reported. She did say at Nottingham that the promoters of the Acts did not dare to ask the Queen to sign such a measure during the life of Prince Albert; but did not say, as reported, that Her Majesty signed the Act believing it to be a Cattle Bill.

‘She considered any reformations under the Acts accidental, and doubted whether, as brought about by the Acts, reformation was a benefit.

‘She would take no legal measures for prevention of the infection of infants by diseased parents; only moral means.’

Their kind stop at nothing in the way of unfounded statements, and are greedy of rumour rather than of accredited facts. Want of acquaintance with, or experience of, the subjects they dogmatise upon deterred them as little then as now from case-hardened obstinacy ; and perhaps no one cut such a sorry figure before the Commission as that illogical and contradictory person, the late John Stuart Mill, the femininely-influenced author of the nowadays somewhat discredited *Subjection of Women*. ‘His chief ground for objection to the system’ (of the C.D. Acts) ‘was on the score of the infringement of personal liberty’ (i.e., the liberty to spread loathsome diseases) ; ‘but he considered it also objectionable for the Government to provide securities against the consequences of immorality. It is a different thing to remedy the consequences after they occur’—as who should say, in the manner of the proverb, Lock the stable door when the horse has been stolen.

[This sham philosopher and political economist of ill-argued theories, who is to-day honoured by an uncomfortable and ungainly statue on the Victoria Embankment, forgot that England has not achieved her greatness by the study or practice of morality : and shall we fall thus late in the day by a Quixotic observance of it ?]

[The sooner the statue of this woman’s advocate is cast into the Thames, or melted down, the better.

Woman’s influence and interference in these

matters have proved an unmixed evil. It would be hopeless, however, to convince her of error : as well might one attempt to hustle an elephant.

Political women are, fortunately, rare in England. A Duchess of Devonshire, a Lady Palmerston, and the politico-social Dames of the Primrose League, these are all the chiefest and most readily-cited female politicians : and their interest was, and is, not so much in the success or defeat of this party or the other as in the return of their favoured candidate or the failure of a pet aversion. Politics have no real meaning for women : their natures do not permit of their comprehension of national and international questions. What does Empire signify to woman if her little world is distracted ? and what is a revolted province to her as against a broken plate ?

The Fates preserve us from Female Suffrage ; for give women votes and patriotism is swamped by the only women who would care to exercise the privilege of voting : the clamorous New Woman, all crotchetts, fads and Radical nostrums for the regeneration of the parish and the benevolent treatment of subjugated races in an Empire won by the sword and retained by might.

IV.—SOME OLD-TIME TERMAGANTS AND ILL-MADE MATCHES OF CELEBRATED MEN.

THE ‘strong-minded woman,’ as the phrase goes, we have always with us nowadays; and as this species of strength of mind seems really to be a violent and uncertain temper, there can be little doubt but that the strong-minded woman has always been more frequent than welcome. Certainly shrewishness and termagancy have been too evident throughout the ages, from the days of Xanthippe to the present time. That much we know from the lives—or shall we say, under the painful circumstances, the ‘existences?’—of public men who have been cursed with scolding wives. But what Asmodeus shall unveil the private conjugal tyrannies, the hectorings, and the curtain-lectures that make miserable the undistinguished lives of men of no importance for good or evil in the State? How many women, in fine, ‘wear the breeches’ through the ‘strength of mind’ which may be justly defined as readiness of that impassioned invective which in its turn may be reduced (like a vulgar fraction) to its

lowest common denominator of ‘nagging.’ Not a pretty word, is it? And it is a practice even less pretty than that cross-grained definition would warrant. We cannot, however, lift the veil that hides the domestic infelicities of the lieges, but must be content to recount the troubles and oppressions that have befallen historic Caudles, who bulk a great deal larger in the history of England than they did, in their own homes, to their wives.

Sir Edward Coke, the great law officer of James the First’s reign—the revered ‘Coke upon Lyttleton’ of the law-student—was little enough of an authority in his own household after he had married his second wife, herself a widow—the ‘relict,’ in fact, of Sir William Newport-Hatton. He married her but a few months after his wife’s death, privately and in haste; probably urged to such an indecent speed by the necessity of forestalling the Lord Keeper Bacon in the lady’s affections. But he had not been wise in his haste; for affection—for him, at least—she had none. She had probably buried all her kindly feelings in the grave with Sir William Hatton, for she would never be known as Lady Coke, but always as Lady Hatton, and, in truth, she led that distinguished and bitter lawyer the life of a dog. One wonders, indeed, why she married him at all, who was old enough to be her father. It was not ambition, for she was by birth a Cecil and daughter of the second Lord Burleigh; nor the want of money, nor the need of a protector, for she was very well

able to take care of herself, as Sir Edward presently discovered, and she was sufficiently wealthy. They quarrelled incessantly—about property, about the marriage of their daughter, about anything and everything. Sir Edward Coke was only suffered to enter her house in London by the back door, and she plundered his residence in the country. She sent her daughter away to Oatlands to prevent a marriage with Sir John Villiers, which Sir Edward was pressing forward; and he, 'with his sonne and ten or eleven servants, weaponed in violent manner,' repaired thither, broke open the door, and took her away. Lady Hatton intrigued at Court against the distracted Coke, who was already in disfavour at St. James's, and procured an interference by the Star Chamber, which condemned his 'most notorious riot'; but Coke eventually gained the upper hand in this matter at least, and the girl was married to the man of his choice. This did not end the enmity. For years they contended together until death parted them. But she survived him by ten years.

Legal subtlety and ability had no terrors for Lady Hatton, and martial prowess daunted the wife of Monk as little, for, in very truth, Lady Albemarle, the famous Nan Clarges, wife of that General Monk who was created first Duke of Albemarle, was so awe-inspiring a termagant that her husband declared he would rather fight a battle than dispute with her, and that the roar of a whole park of artillery was not so terrible to him as her tongue loosened in

floods of abuse. There is no doubt that he regretted his union with the washerwoman's daughter whom he had married, who was neither beautiful nor witty. Nan Clarges had all the ancestry and upbringing that made for shrewishness. Her mother was one of the five women barbers who gained notoriety by their vulgarity even in that age, and her father was a blacksmith and farrier, one John Clarges, who lived at the corner of Drury Lane and the Strand, over his forge. Her mother became afterwards a laundress, and she herself dabbled in the soapsuds before and after her marriage to Thomas Ratford, whose father was also a farrier. This marriage took place in 1632, and she and her husband occupied a shop in the New Exchange in the Strand, where they sold gloves, powder, and cosmetics. Her parents died in 1648, and she and her husband separated in the following year. Three years later she married Colonel Monk, whose laundress she had been. Although the tongue of scandal was not idle when one re-married who was not a widow, the farrier never reappeared to claim his wife, and when the Restoration was accomplished (partly, it is said, owing to her Royalist sympathies), and General Monk became Duke of Albemarle, none were found to question her title of Duchess. But she became the laughing-stock of the Court and gave general disgust to Pepys, who calls her in good faith 'a plain, homely dowdy,' and ironically 'that paragon of virtue and beauty.' On one occasion he 'found

the Duke of Albemarle at dinner with sorry company; some of his officers of the Army; dirty dishes and a nasty wife at table, and bad meat.'

But she was mildness itself compared with that 'she-devil,' Bess of Hardwicke, who was wedded and a widow before her sixteenth year, and saw four husbands into the grave. She was the daughter of a rich Derbyshire gentleman, who died and left her his sole heiress at an early age. She fascinated and married a neighbour, the young and invalid Mr. Barley, whose property ranged with her own. He lived but a short while, and left her a charming widow with a great access of wealth.

Her second venture was Sir William Cavendish, a Suffolk gentleman of good family and great property, whom she married and constrained to sell his Suffolk lands and settle with her in Derbyshire. She ruled him thoroughly, and he seems to have been little better than her chief director of works in the building operations that were a passion with this singular woman through the whole of her long life. Her home was at Hardwicke Hall; but she now began to build a very much more magnificent house at Chatsworth. She had not proceeded very far with this work before Sir William Cavendish, probably wearied out with being ruled in all things, followed her first husband to the grave. Lady Cavendish mourned him for a decent period, keeping her eye open the while for another eligible, whom she presently found in the person of the

widower, Sir William Saint Lo, a captain in Queen Elizabeth's guard and a gentleman of considerable property in the neighbourhood of Bath. But Sir William had a family, and she could not think of wedding him until he had made a settlement upon her of all his lands. He did so readily, this bluff soldier; for he was absurdly fond of her, as his letters show. He was, however, detained much in the service of the Queen, in London and at Windsor, and died very soon.

Lady Saint Lo was now become extremely wealthy, with her own fortune and the added wealth of three husbands deceased, but she was far from content. She was building incessantly, both terrestrial habitations and airy castles, and hungered both for more wealth and greater social distinction. For some while she cast about for another partner, and at length found a suitable quarry in George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, another widower with a grown-up family. Him she married, and from that time he knew but little peace. True, the first year or so of their union seems to have been comparatively mild, but the storms that ensued were beyond anything. The Earl was for nineteen years the custodian of Mary, Queen of Scots, and she seems to have aroused the jealousy of the Countess, for the unfortunate Talbot was surrounded with his wife's spies, and the espions whom the English Queen's suspicious nature also set around him made his life a misery. Poor Talbot! two queens and a



ELIZABETH,
COUNTESS OF
SHREWSBURY.

wife—and such a wife—to serve, guard, and pacify. How wretched he must have been in that gorgeous palace of 'Chattysworth,' as the old-time spelling had it! His wife embittered his own sons against him, while her family of Cavendishes hated him cordially, and, as he had foolishly made over his property to her upon his marriage, he lived practically upon sufferance. Queen Elizabeth, in whose service he continually expressed the greatest loyalty, took the part of his wife, and ordered him to be content with an allowance of 500*l.* per annum which the Countess vouchsafed him—'to my perpetual infamy and great dishonour,' as he wrote, 'thus to be ruled and overanne by my wief, so bad and wicked a woman. But your Majesty shall see that I will observe your commandments, though no curse or plague on earth colde be more grievous to me.' Poor fellow! his faults were few, probably the greatest of them being a weak amiability which led him to be reconciled time and again to his wife, who used every reconciliation as a means to the end of entreating him even more shamefully than before. He died at length, wearied out with lawsuits, the ingratitude of his own children, and the bitter animosity of his wife. She survived him for many years, and died, aged eighty-eight, in the winter of 1607, during a hard frost which put a stop to the building works which she was carrying on here and there over all her possessions. She was passionately fond of bricks and

mortar, or else was mindful of a prophecy that she should live so long as she continued building. That prophecy was fulfilled by the frost, which rendered her workmen idle.

Ann Clifford, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery, was another insatiate builder, and a woman of very great independence of character ; not a vindictive fiend, like old Bess of Hardwicke, but, all the same, a woman who would have her way. She married the Earl of Dorset, as weak and vicious a man as she was a strong and virtuous woman, with whom she lived most unhappily. When he fortunately died, she declared that she would not wed a man who was either a curser, a courtier, or a swearer, or who had children ; and it so happened that in marrying Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, she allied herself to a widower with a family, who was both a courtier and a proficient in vile language and fancy swearing. He, however, soon joined the majority, and his widow took no more chances in the lottery of marriage. She busied herself in rebuilding her castles, which had been destroyed during the Civil War, six of them throughout Cumberland and Westmoreland : and spent the remainder of her long life in journeying from one to another, carrying with her the huge volumes in which she had collected the records of the Clifford family and the memoirs of her own life. Hers was the borough of Appleby, for which Sir John Williamson, Secretary of State,



ANN CLIFFORD, COUNTESS OF DORSET,
PEMBROKE AND MONTGOMERY,
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proposed a candidate. But the Countess, who had despised Cromwell and loathed the viciousness of Charles the Second's *entourage*, replied, in a characteristic note, 'I have been bullied by an usurper; I have been neglected by a Court; but I won't be dictated to by a subject. Your man shan't stand.—ANN DORSET, PEMBROKE, AND MONTGOMERY.' She was a wonderful woman. She spoke five languages fluently, and was accomplished in many ways, and, according to Bishop Rainbow, of Carlisle, who preached her funeral sermon, 'she had a clear soul shining through a vivid body: her body was durable and healthful,' he continues; 'her soul sprightly and of great understanding and judgment, faithful memory, and ready wit.' She was 'a perfect mistress of forecast and aftercast,' and, according to Doctor Donne, 'knew well how to converse of all things, from predestination to slea-silk.' She was no less great as a builder than Nimrod was mighty as a hunter, and Bess of Hardwicke was scarce her equal in the piling up of bricks and mortar.

She spent over 40,000*l.* in this way, and the good bishop who preached her funeral sermon took, as an apt text, 'Every wise woman buildeth her house.' She rebuilt the castles of Brougham, Appleby, Skipton, Bardon Tower, Pendragon, and Brough; she restored the churches of Bongate, Skipton, and Appleby, and the chapels of Ninekirks, Brougham, Bongate, and Mallerstang; she erected

a monument to Spenser in Westminster Abbey, another—on the old Penrith road—to her mother, the Dowager Countess of Cumberland, and another still to her tutor, Samuel Daniel, and she founded and restored almshouses, besides.

But the first Duchess of Marlborough was a prize termagant, although in early life a woman of winning ways. Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, was the ruler of that great commander and military genius, John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, and victor of such hard-fought fields as Blenheim, Ramillies, and Malplaquet.

The rise of the Churchills reads like a romance, so constantly was their progress maintained for so many years. He was the son of an impoverished country gentleman who had lost his all in a chivalric attachment to Charles the First, and gained little consideration for it when the Restoration brought Charles the Second to Dover, and the King enjoyed his own again. All the recompense the ruined Cavalier received was the reception of his son, afterwards to become the most famous soldier and general of his time, as a page in the service of the King's brother, the Duke of York.

Macaulay's Whiggish prejudices forbade him writing anything to the credit of the Duke of Marlborough ; and so he seized upon the gossip of the time, which has come down to us, and has stated as a fact that John Churchill owed this initiatory post to the interest of his sister Arabella,



ANN CLIFFORD, COUNTESS OF DORSET,
PEMBROKE, AND MONTGOMERY,
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who had become an acknowledged mistress of the Duke of York. 'The young lady was not beautiful,' he says, in his *History of England*, 'but the taste of James was not nice, and she became his avowed mistress. She was the daughter of a poor Cavalier knight who haunted Whitehall, and made himself ridiculous by publishing a dull and affected folio, long forgotten, in praise of monarchs and monarchy. The necessity of the Churchills was pressing, their loyalty was ardent, and their only feeling on Arabella's seduction seems to have been joyful surprise that so plain a girl should have obtained such height of preferment.'

But Churchill's good looks and gallant bearing stood him in better stead than this in that profligate court. He captivated the fancy of his distant cousin, Barbara Palmer, the most beautiful of the King's mistresses, already created Duchess of Cleveland as the price of her dishonour. Buckingham afforded the King ocular proof of this attachment, and we are told that Churchill was sent into practical banishment, but to an ostensible command in Tangier, or into the Low Countries. The Duchess of Cleveland made her kinsman a present of 5000*l.*, with which he promptly purchased an annuity of 500*l.*, and so laid a foundation to his fortunes.

England was for a time in close alliance with France, and it was then and there that the young officer—he held a commission in the Guards—learned scientific warfare under those past-masters in

the art of war, Condé and Turenne. He remained for five years in Flanders, and during that time distinguished himself at numerous places, more especially at the siege of Maestricht, where 'the handsome Englishman,' as Turenne called him, was thanked for his services by Louis XIV.

Returning to England, he was married privately to Sarah Jennings, whose family, like his own, had suffered great misfortunes in the cause of the Stuarts. She had been introduced to Court, and had obtained a position there as maid-of-honour to James's second wife, the young and beautiful Mary of Modena, by the interest of her elder sister, the '*Belle Jennings*' of Grammont, who had held a similar post during the lifetime of the first Duchess of York. She and her sister were the only virtuous women in all that court, and neither the cajoleries of the King nor his brother availed anything to induce them to join the ranks of the Nell Gwynnes, the Barbara Palmers, or the Louise de Querouaille, whose shame helped to swell the peerage.

Sarah Jennings was not the equal of her sister in beauty, of whom Grammont says 'she had a complexion of dazzling fairness, luxuriant hair of a light golden colour, an animated countenance, and the most beautiful mouth in the world. Nature had adorned her with every charm, to which the Graces had added the finishing touches. She gave you the idea of Aurora, or of the Goddess of Spring, as the poets depict those divinities.' She did not quite



SARAH,
DUCHESS OF
MARLBOROUGH.





come up to this standard, but, if the judgment of her contemporaries and the truth of the painter's brush may be accepted on her behalf, she would have been the foremost beauty at Whitehall or Saint James's had not her sister already held that distinction. Kneller's portrait of her shows a face of considerable beauty, poised charmingly upon a graceful neck and fringed with flowing curls and with luxuriant hair as fine, one would dare contend, as that of her sister Frances, the theme of that French gossip. She has in all her portraits that piquant beauty which shines out of glancing eyes, full and luscious (eyes which the Churchills have inherited to the present day); that comes of a departure from regularity of feature; which is exhibited most charmingly in the nose, tip-tilted ever so little, but destructive of all coldness and frigid hauteur of appearance; eyes eloquent, nose rebellious, chin a little cleft and firm; lips somewhat rich and ripe, and with a sensuousness that must have been three parts the convention that obtained among the courtly painters of the time. Do you wonder, looking at her counterfeit presentment, that she should have been the ultimate ruler of that great commanding officer; the scourge of Ministers of State; or that the Queen—Anne, the most paltry puppet of a sovereign which modern times afford our astonished gaze—should have been for years entirely under her thumb? She was a woman of imperious and ungovernable temper, shrewd withal,

if not a little shrewish; accomplished and clever enough to have proved, for a time, a match for the intriguers who beset the Throne during the last years of the seventeenth century and the first of the eighteenth. During a great part of Queen Anne's reign the country, it has been truly said, was ruled by a Triumvirate: the Duchess of Marlborough ruled her mellifluous Mrs. Morley, the Queen; the Duke had, in reality, fulfilled the kingly function of going forth to battle and defeating the enemies of the nation; while Godolphin ruled the Parliament in his absence. But the greatest of these, in council, was the Duchess. The Queen was a *quantité négligeable*, and Marlborough himself, very accurately, if contemptuously, described her in the Courts of Europe as 'a very good sort of a woman.' Anne reigned, but did not govern, but 'Mrs. Freeman' had ambition enough, and very nearly the capacity, to govern everybody but herself; and there the want of self-control and her woman's reckless tongue betrayed her.

There is no doubt that the Duchess was extremely fond of, and ambitious for, her husband; and that the love was mutual may readily be gathered from the Duke's letters to his wife years after their marriage. He writes after Ramillies: 'I did not tell my dearest soul in my last my design of engaging the enemy if possible to a battle, fearing the concern she has for me might make her uneasy. . . . If I could begin life over

again, I would devote every hour of it to you, but as God has been pleased to bless me, I do not doubt but he will reward me with some years to end my days with you.' This was twenty-eight years after their marriage, and is eloquent of Churchill's rare constancy and faithful heart. But though he appears from his letters so uxorious a husband, he exercised a judicious restraint upon his feelings on occasion, and his naturally equable, calm, and reserved temper stood him in good stead when the Duchess was more than usually unreasonable and furious. Thus there is a story told of her, that once, in order to vex him who admired her beautiful hair so greatly, she cut off those shining tresses which Kneller has painted so well and laid them on the Duke's dressing-table. But, however much he was pained by this act of singular spite, he showed nothing of it by his manner. He scarcely seemed to notice them, and when she came again to look for them they were gone, and no word said. She had failed that time, and did not dare to mention the circumstance. But, after the Duke's death, in collecting his papers, she found her hair which she had cut off years before treasured up in a secret place among his most cherished possessions. She was used to tell the tale herself, and when she came to this part, she invariably broke down and 'fell a-crying' for shame and grief.

'The beauty of the Duchess of Marlborough,' says Horace Walpole, 'had always been of the

scornful and imperious kind, and her features and air announced nothing that her temper did not confirm ; both together, her beauty and temper, enslaved her heroic lord.'

She was pugnacious beyond all bounds, and commanded fear and respect, even when she was not loved, by her undoubted abilities. She had a son and four daughters. The son died in early youth ; her daughters all became peeresses, and they and their daughters were harried by her continually. She affected to be fond of her granddaughter, the Duchess of Manchester, daughter of the Duchess of Montagu, her youngest child. She said to her one day, 'Duchess of Manchester, you are a good creature, and I love you mightily—but you *have* a mother !' 'And *she* has a mother,' replied the Duchess of Manchester. And she had, indeed, in a superlative degree.

'The great Sarah' was, in fact, never happy unless she had some quarrel on hand. She was offended by her granddaughter, Lady Anne Egerton's conduct in arranging a marriage between her brother and a daughter of Lord Trevor. This alliance certainly could not fail to be galling to the widowed Duchess, who, now that her husband was dead, idolised his memory and pursued with an unquenchable hatred all those who had opposed him in former years. For Lord Trevor had been one of the great Duke's bitterest enemies ; and now for a grandson of Marlborough to marry a daughter of

one who had reviled him and had sat in the seat of the scorner! It was too much. She had a portrait of her granddaughter brought her, and, to show her hatred, painted the face black and wrote an inscription for it, 'She is much blacker within.'

Her temper had grown more furious with her advancing years, soured as she had been by the ultimate revolt of Anne against her imperious and insulting behaviour toward her Majesty in public. She had given the Queen her gloves and fan to hold during State ceremonies, and affected not to hear when spoken to. Certainly no royal favourite had ever before held power by the uncompromising frankness with which the Duchess of Marlborough treated the Queen; and whatever else may be laid to her charge, neither flattery nor a cringing attitude, fulsome adulation nor obsequious humility, can be attributed to her. All those qualities of the sycophant are to be found in the character of Abigail Hill, the poor relation for whom the Duchess had found a small position in the royal nursery, and who managed by these meannesses to alienate the affections of the weak and sullen Queen. Courts were different then, and politics entered largely even into the doings and attention of the royal domestics. Abigail Hill, who had been engaged as a rocker of royal or princely cradles, exercised her influence, tutored as it was by Mr. Secretary Harley, upon the Queen, who dismissed the Duchess of Marlborough from her office as Mistress of the Robes,

and with the dismissal of the Duchess fell the Ministry of Marlborough and Godolphin.

Marlborough, who was as able a diplomat as he was a soldier, who knew the secrets of every European Court, was unconscious of the plottings and backstairs influences which were undermining his own power. The Duchess, too, knew nothing until their political ruin was accomplished, and then all was in vain. Although the conqueror of so many hard-fought fields and the crafty overreacher of astute statesmen might plead for the reinstatement of his wife with all his eloquence, and even go on his knees to implore the Queen's favour, the steadfast obstinacy of a stupid woman oppressed for years, and too weak for revolt until now, was proof against all the matchless services and traditions of the man ; and the position which the great Sarah's arrogance and folly had lost them the Marlboroughs never regained.

'The Viceroy over the Queen,' as she had been termed, was no longer heard ; even when she went in person to Kensington Palace, the Queen would no longer listen to her. 'Dear Mrs. Morley' and 'Dearest Mrs. Freeman' were estranged for ever, and though six years later the Queen died, and that commonplace dynasty the House of Hanover came to the throne in the person of George I., neither the Duke nor the Duchess of Marlborough ever again held the power which had once been theirs. Marlborough died in 1720. His wife survived him for over twenty-four years, dying at the advanced age

of eighty-four. Age did not wither her resolution nor custom stale her pugnacity. She still panted, like the war-horse in Job, for the fray ; she sniffed contention from afar, and kept Death himself waiting an unconscionable time. A year before her death, when very ill and like to shuffle off this mortal coil, her physicians, in consultation over her bed, upon which she lay in apparent unconsciousness, decided that she must either be blistered or she must die. ' Must ' was no word to utter in her presence ; compulsion was not to be thought of or applied to that proud spirit. ' I won't be blistered, and I won't die,' she exclaimed, with her old fire and vehemence—and she did neither at that time.

She died, possessed of immense wealth, at Marlborough House, on October 18th, 1744. She left an income of 30,000*l.* a year to her grandson, Charles, Duke of Marlborough, and the same to his brother ; while her hatreds were shown in the legacies she bequeathed to Pitt (afterwards Earl of Chatham) and to the Earl of Chesterfield, in recognition of their opposition to one of her pet aversions, Sir Robert Walpole.

The mother of that doughty champion of the Church in the thirteenth century, Robert de Insula, Bishop of Durham from 1274 to 1283, must have been the very ideal of a shrew. The Bishop rose to his high station from quite a menial office in the monastery of Durham, and his origin was so lowly that he had no family name, but is supposed to have

assumed one from his birthplace of Holy Island, off the Durham coast. The monkish chronicler of Waverley calls him Halieland, and the Monk of Lanercost dubs him 'Robertus de Coquinâ,' from which it would seem that even these old historians had their prejudices. However that may be, the Bishop was either not ashamed of his origin, or else had all the vanity of a 'self-made' man, for he was not slow to allude to the original meanness of his birth on occasion, as the following anecdote may show :—'The Bishop was once at Norham, and the Lord of Scremerton sent him a present of some country ale. The Bishop had long been unused to such humble beverage, yet, from respect to the donor, and also to the good report of the liquor, he tasted a cup of it—*et non sustinens statim a mensa surgens evomuit*. "See," said he, "the force of custom: you all know my origin, and that neither from my parents nor my country can I derive any taste for wine, and yet now my country liquor is rendered utterly distasteful to me."

To his mother the Bishop gave a train of male and female servants, and an honourable establishment, as befitted the parent of one come to such high dignity as to be Bishop Palatine of Durham. He visited her afterwards, and apparently found the dame in anything but a sweet temper.

'What ails my sweet mother?' says he; 'how fares she?'

‘Never worse,’ quoth she.

‘And what ails thee, then, or troubles thee?’ asks the good son. ‘Hast thou not men and women and attendants sufficient?’

‘Yea,’ quoth she, ‘and more than enough. I say to one, “Go,” and he runs; to another, “Come hither, fellow,” and the varlet falls down on his knee; and, in short, all things go on so abominably smooth that my heart is bursting for something to spite me, and pick a quarrel withal.’ And with that she fell a-weeping.

Lady Hester Stanhope, daughter of Charles, third Earl Stanhope, granddaughter of the great Earl of Chatham, and niece of William Pitt, was a woman of unbounded vanity, arrogance, and ill-temper. A technical termagant she could not be, for she was never married, and that was perhaps a better fate which met General Sir John Moore at Corunna than would have been his had he survived his disastrous retreat, and returned to England. For Hester Stanhope was his *fiancée*; and if he had married her, she could not have failed of keeping him in a life-long subjection.

She was undoubtedly a clever woman, witty, and with some learning; but all her doings were eccentric and fantastical beyond measure, and tinctured strongly with hereditary madness. For her father was something more than strange in his doings. He, too, had gifts, but they were overlaid by a singular species of mental alienation. He was a furious Republican, and it is related of him that,

in accordance with those principles, he caused his armorial bearings to be obliterated from his plate, his carriages, and from everything he possessed. He halted only before the destruction of the iron gates of his house at Chevening: having removed even the magnificent tapestry given to his ancestor, the great Stanhope, by the King of Spain, for the reason that it was (to quote himself) 'damned aristocratical.' He sold all his Spanish plate, weighing six hundredweight, for the same whim, and was used to sleep at once with twelve blankets over him and his bedroom window wide open.

Two of a kind rarely agree together, and so it is not surprising to find that Lady Hester Stanhope felt her father's society insupportable. She left home and went to reside with her grandmother, the dowager Lady Chatham, in Somersetshire; afterwards going to keep house for her uncle, William Pitt, in his retirement at Walmer. A year later, he became again Prime Minister, and she, acting as one of his assistant private secretaries, moved for a time in the centre of political and social turmoil. But when Pitt died, broken-hearted at the news of Napoleon's victory of Austerlitz, his niece suddenly lost the prestige that had given her a factitious importance, and was fain to retire to the obscurity of Montagu Square, where for a time she kept house for her two half-brothers who both held commissions in the army. War breaking out, her occupation was gone, and, after a short retirement to Builth, she set



LADY HESTER
STANHOPE.

out upon some extraordinary escapades in travelling which finally landed her in Syria, where she lived until 1839 in a rambling house—half monastery, half palace—on the slopes of Mount Lebanon, intriguing with or against the Porte, and the petty Sheiks and Emirs of the surrounding country. She was in receipt of a Government pension of 1200*l.* a year for a very long period, and had considerable wealth besides, until her reckless extravagance dissipated all and brought her not only to poverty, but in debt to the amount of 40,000*l.* She kept up a considerable household in her seclusion upon Mount Lebanon, and retained a physician all to herself. Certainly she never paid him anything, but he seems to have taken it out in a kind of posthumous vilification, acting as the Boswell to her Johnson, and publishing, some years after her death, three volumes of memoirs, correspondence, and conversations. He was a poor, invertebrate sort of a creature, this physician, who was content to stay beside a patient—or rather an employer—who not only paid him nothing, but consistently refused to follow his advice, and medicined herself with nostrums. It was sufficient for him to sit by her, to listen to her harangues—she made nothing of talking incessantly for twelve hours at one sitting—and to endure the plentiful abuse of doctors in general, and himself in particular, which was the staple of her conversation: to have been at length sent away with the curt intimation that he 'had better take

himself off,' seems to have aroused no resentment in this much-enduring man. Certainly, he mentions that he was, personally and professionally, subjected constantly to stinging insults, and that he suffered from her tyranny ; but it would not appear that he ever grew restive under these repeated indignities.

Lady Hester was, indeed, no mealy-mouthed blue-stocking. She had a rasping tongue, used on occasion language rather more free than welcome, and had the voice of a drill-sergeant. Added to these qualifications, she possessed biceps of unusual development, and used her muscles with effect on the miserable men and women Arabs over whom she ruled with the rigour of a *Draco* or a military martinet. She rather prided herself on the straight and forcible blows she could deliver, and lost no opportunity of demonstrating her prowess upon her trembling slaves. Her 'physician' remarks that 'from her manner towards people it would have seemed that she was the only person in creation privileged to abuse and to command ; others had nothing else to do but to obey and not to think. She was haughty and overbearing, impatient of control, born to rule, and more at her ease when she had a hundred persons to govern than when she had only ten. . . . Never was any one so fond of wielding weapons, and of boasting of her capability of using them upon a fit occasion, as she was.' She kept a kind of armoury in her bedroom, and slept with a steel mace beside her, a battle-axe and an

assortment of daggers, poniards, and other murderous cutlery of that description lying within easy reach ; and, if she did not actually use them upon the cowering wretches with whom she was surrounded, was probably owing rather to their care in not it giving offence to this terrible she-devil than to any forbearance on her part. She stunned her *entourage* by her unusual combination of masculine and feminine powers of offence and defence. She could storm and rage, could nag and scold with the most proficient virago, and fists or mace were ready when those more womanlike resources were exhausted.

She had the most excruciatingly ridiculous pride of birth and rank, and was vain of her personal appearance long after any such beauty as she ever possessed had fled. That beauty could only have been of complexion ; for if her resemblance to her uncle, William Pitt, upon which she always insisted, was more than a fancy, her features must have been mean and insignificant. Pitt was the object of her whole-souled admiration, and the Pitt family—she was a Pitt on her mother's side—she apparently considered to be above all the ordinary rules and restrictions of honour and probity which bind, or are supposed to bind, meaner mortals. Her physician tells us that she had on an occasion asked him if such an one ought not to act in a certain way. ‘Undoubtedly,’ said he ; ‘a person of principle would not act otherwise.’ ‘Principle !’ she exclaimed.

‘What do you mean by principle? I am a Pitt!’
Nothing was impossible after this.

But it seems likely that this, like most of her sayings and doings, was merely a pose, meant to attract attention and make her notorious. It was doubtless to the same end that she professed to dabble in magic and astrology, and that she affected a belief in the proximate coming of the Messiah. Awaiting His arrival, she kept two Arabian mares constantly saddled which had never been ridden, and these mares had each a special attendant whose business was to keep everything ready for the celestial visitor, who should ride thence in triumph to Jerusalem with Lady Hester Stanhope as a kind of lady-guide!

And so to end this galaxy of shining lights in the whole art and mystery of shrewishness and termagancy. Many more there be, but these are the most notorious of that unblessed company.

Turn we now to the unhappy marriages of men of genius, whose careers in literature and art are public property.

The instances are so numerous in which men of genius or great mental activity have embittered their lives by marriages which have proved fruitful of discord and strife, that the proposition, ‘Should Genius be mated?’ might well be negatived in discussion.

Warning examples, from Socrates with his shrewish Xanthippe, to the morose and bearish

Thomas Carlyle, who rendered his wife's existence miserable with his acerbity and ill-humours, are frequent throughout the centuries, and sufficient, one might think, to deter Genius from mating with Common-sense, or to hinder Common-sense from running the risks of a lifelong companionship with Genius. And yet artists and literary men, musicians and philosophers, marry after the repeated failures of their predecessors to secure domestic happiness; and women, in their ambition to marry men who show evidences of successful careers in intellectual occupations, have no hesitancy in risking a martyrdom of mental solitude and loneliness that is certainly less directly painful and agonising than the fate of those stalwarts who died for conscience sake, but which is drawn out indefinitely in years of apparent neglect and obvious aloofness from all the interests of their husbands' lives.

But, in considering the unhappy relations that have often existed between the men of genius who have married women of ordinary, or less than ordinary, mental capacity, the indictment must fall far heavier upon the women, because—as will be shown—the active ill-humours and spiteful opposition of their wives have far outweighed the indifference or want of thought of which these men of parts may have been unconsciously guilty in their homes. It is, and has always been, the especial attribute or misfortune of genius that it should be mentally isolated and solitary, impatient

of and uncaring for petty domestic details and the sordid cares of housekeeping. Pegasus is a brute transcended beyond the dray-horse that pounds the earth with vibrant hoofs. He soars above the mountain-tops and breathes the rarefied air of the most Alpine heights. He does not go well in double harness and so has no companion on his journeys.

The wives of great geniuses, of the inspired among poets, painters, musicians, or *litterateurs*, cannot accompany them in their exaltations of thought or help them in technique; nor, to do those ladies the merest justice, have they often essayed the feat; having been, like the wife of Racine, content to regard their husbands as journeymen who earned their living and kept the household going by the production of so much painted canvas or so many written sheets of paper for which incomprehensible people absurdly gave large sums of money. Racine's wife made it a stupid boast that she had never read a line of her husband's verse; Heine's Parisian grisette never attempted to understand her great man's genius; and many other wives of genius have remained incapable of understanding the merits or demerits of their husbands' work. But these comparatively harmless freaks of stupidity and silly lack of appreciation, though mortifying to one's vanity, were nothing in comparison with such active revolts and exhibitions of termagancy as were indulged in by

the wife of Young, author of the *Night Thoughts*, who threw her husband's manuscripts on the fire, or by Dante's wife—he had better have remained in celibacy, mourning Beatrice all his life—who gave him some sort of insight to an earthly *Inferno*. She had no notion of allowing him to have his own way in anything, and 'he had to account for every sigh which he heaved.' Banishment could not really have harmed him, since his wife remained behind.

Sir Thomas More was another unhappy Benedick, if we are to believe the gossips. His first marriage was peaceful enough; but his second, when he married a widow, one Alice Middleton, was all strife and contention. Perhaps, he wrote his *Utopia*, 'A fruteful and pleasaunt Worke of the beste State of a publyque Weale, and of the newe yle called Utopia,' as a welcome relief from domestic broils. His conscience would not allow him to recognise the validity of Henry the Eighth's marriage with Anne Boleyn, and he was cast into the Tower for his pains, presently to be executed on that spot rich in the blood of martyrs for all manner of adequate and inadequate causes—Tower Hill. His wife, with the essentially Jesuitical feminine mind, came daily to where he lay in the Tower and abused him soundly for not giving in his adherence to the King's wishes. 'Thou mightest,' said she, 'be in thine own house, hadst thou but done as others:' and I am not sure but what she was in the right;

for life is pleasant and self-preservation the whole duty of man. An unruly conscience has been the sole undoing of many a worthy man, both before and since the time of Sir Thomas More.

They say that Shakespeare's was an unhappy wedded life. Ann Hathaway—

‘She hath a will, she hath a way’—

was twenty-six when he married her, while he was but eighteen. How eloquent, then, this excerpt from *Twelfth Night*—

‘Let the woman take
An elder than herself: so wears she to him ;
So sways she level in her husband’s heart :
For, boy (however we do praise ourselves),
Our fancies are more giddy and infirm,
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,
Than women’s are.
Then let thy love be younger than thyself,
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent.’

But do not put too much faith in the biographical value of literary expression, nor assume that these views have much bearing upon Shakespeare’s married life. His sonnets breathed love and passion for ladies dark or fair, and very various; but then ‘twas his trade to assume what he did not feel, and to trick it out in glowing pages of dainty poesy. I, for one, would not regard them nor their like as arguments or evidence in favour of divorce. So, in all charity to sweet Will, let us scout the suggestion of a writer who wrote some years since on the

unhappy marriages of men of genius, even as I do here, that 'we have the internal evidence of his sonnets that he was not a faithful husband.' We had far better keep to the scanty facts which have come down to us respecting Shakespeare's life. We know, for instance, that he left Stratford-on-Avon and settled in London but four years after his marriage. It cannot be said with certainty whether or not his wife came up with him from Warwickshire, but it is likely enough that she did not. And yet can we reasonably blame any one less impersonal than Thalia or Melpomene for his leaving his wife behind him in that old town beside the Avon? I would suppose that Ann Hathaway was uncongenial to him in so far that, and because she had no sort of appreciation of, nor any love of, the medium of words in which her husband worked.

It was not until he had reached his forty-eighth year that Shakespeare returned to his native town. He lived there with his wife and his daughter Judith for four years, and then died.

Dryden's wife must have been, no less than Carlyle, 'gey ill to live wi.' He married, in his thirty-third year, the Lady Eliza Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, a woman whose intellect was as cloudy as her reputation, and whose violence oftentimes caused the poet to wish her dead. He wrote an epitaph in anticipation of that consummation he most devoutly wished; but she survived him, and, singularly enough, the epitaph which was

never used has survived them both to the present day. He said—

‘Here lies my wife ; here let her lie ;
Now she’s at rest—and so am I.’

And so they are.

Wycherley, too, had his connubial infelicities. He married the widowed Countess of Drogheda, whom Macaulay describes as ill-tempered, imperious, and extravagantly jealous. Nothing is more likely than that she had due cause for jealousy, for Wycherley was no saint. But she managed to keep him under restraint, and only permitted him to meet his cronies under her surveillance. That is, he was suffered to entertain his fellow-dramatists in a room of the tavern that stood opposite their house, whence she could observe him through the open windows, and assure herself that no woman was of the company.

Wycherley had, doubtless, himself to blame for this espionage and suspicion ; but jealousy is, perhaps, as frequently unfounded as deserved. Berlioz, for instance, who married the charming Henrietta Smithson, an Irish operatic singer, was driven, through his wife’s unreasonable jealousy, to elope with the first pretty girl he met. He had been madly infatuated with her, and she seems to have wed him, not from affection, but because of his importunity ; and, even so, she did not comply until after an accident had unfitted her for the stage, and she was fain to retire. But indifference changed to

an acute jealousy after marriage. She so wearied the musician with her baseless suspicions, that at last he felt the absurdity of bearing the odium of sin without having experienced its pleasures. So, one fine day, he packed a portmanteau and sped to Brussels in company with 'another,' to speak in the manner of the lady novelists.

Comte, the founder of the Positivist religion, and the defender of marriage, led a wretched married life. Hooker, the 'judicious,' seems not to have deserved that epithet in so far as his choice of a domestic tyrant was concerned. Sir Richard Steele should not have married a second time; he might have known that the good fortune of his first choice militated against the chance of equal luck on another occasion. Montaigne—good soul—declared that he would not marry again after his untoward experiences; no, not if he had the choice of wisdom incarnate.

Man who has once been wed deserves the consolations of heaven, according to the story in which a soul (masculine) comes to the gates of Paradise and knocks. Peter catechises him, but finds his record inadequate, and is about to turn him away: 'Stay, though,' says the saint; 'have you been married?' 'Yes,' replies the soul. 'Enter, then,' rejoins the janitor, compassionately; 'you have deserved much from your sufferings on earth!' 'Ah!' cries the spirit, enlarging upon its claims to present bliss from past ills; 'I have been married

twice !' 'Twice ?' shouts Peter, indignantly ; 'away with you. Paradise is not for fools !'

How little, then, did Milton deserve the Paradise of which he wrote, for he was married no less than three times, and that, too, after the unpleasant experiences of his first alliance. Mary Powell, his first wife, was a shrew. She was the daughter of an Oxfordshire Royalist, and, disgusted and alarmed at the severity with which Milton, who was then a dominie, treated the boys under his charge, she left him after the honeymoon and returned home. For three years she kept apart, paying no attention to his requests for her to return, and she only rejoined him after Naseby, when, the Royalist hopes being shattered, it seemed advisable that she and her people should seek the shelter that the roof of so uncompromising a Puritan afforded. He received her, and for the remaining fifteen years she made his life miserable.

Addison made a great social triumph for eighteenth-century literature when he married the widowed Countess of Warwick, but in doing so he sowed the whirlwind for his own reaping. Her arrogance was monumental, and she made her stately house at Kensington so unbearable to him, that he was used to fly her presence and take refuge in a little country tavern that stood in those days on the high road to London, at the corner of a lane which is now the Earl's Court Road. Domestic strife drove him to the bottle, and the '*Spectator*'

died 'like a Christian,' indeed, but with an intellect clouded by drink.

In more recent times, the marriages of Byron, Bulwer-Lytton, and Dickens were notoriously unhappy ; but, certainly, these three men of genius must have been almost insufferable husbands. Dickens had as good a conceit of himself as ever Scot desired or prayed for—and genius that can usurp the functions of the critics and calculate the candle-power of its effulgence to a ray more or less must needs be intolerable either at the club or in the home. Byron took advantage of that independence of moral laws which is supposed to be the especial attribute of genius—and indeed (although one need not have any absurd prejudices in favour of morality) he was but a sordid scamp, with a bee in his bonnet and a fluent facile gift of versification. His person, his title, and (above all) his reputation for immorality made his fame and sold his works : and what unholy trinity more powerful than this for popularity ?

Bulwer-Lytton was an odious fellow, a 'curled darling,' jewelled, scented, and self-centred. He wrote, presumably of himself : 'Clever men, as a rule, do choose the oddest wives. The cleverer a man is the more easily, I believe, a woman can take him in.' That, doubtless, was a piece of special pleading on behalf of his own extreme cleverness, for he was the victim of a virago who was the more terrible for being a little less than sane and more

than eccentric. He bought her off with an annuity of 400*l.*, but lawsuits directed against him afforded a spice to her life, and persecutions in the form of novels written 'with a purpose'—the purpose of abusing him—and of public altercations, rendered Lytton's marriage with Rosina Wheeler one of the most bitterly regretted actions of his life. 'There were faults on both sides'—to adopt the saying of the gossips: he was irritable and violent, and she was—violent and irritable! Nor was she readily put aside. For years after their separation she never wearied of drawing attention to her wrongs, and it was in 1858, during Lytton's candidature for Hertford, that she appeared before the hustings on which he was preparing to address the free and enlightened voters, and burst upon his vision, an excited female, dressed in yellow satin and flourishing an umbrella, while she denounced him at the top of her voice as a perjured villain. She was no meek and uncomplaining martyr: she proclaimed her wrongs *urbi et orbi*, and compelled attention.

Had Coleridge such a wife, his digestion would have been a great deal more disordered than it was used to be in the conjugal difficulties that led him to leave his home. Had Romney been wed to so strenuous a shrew, he had not deserted his wife for over thirty years without some public scandal; and had Tommy Moore espoused any but the most easy-going and long-suffering of wives, his amorous verse would have purchased him many a wiggling, I

warrant. That modern Anacreon wrote a poem on the origin of woman which would have been impossible to the uxorious, and is sufficient to set the Modern Woman shrieking with indignation. And yet the women of his time delighted in his society! Those verses are, for some unexplained reason, not to be found in the later editions of his works. In them he versifies the Rabbinical theory of woman's origin—that Adam had a tail, and it was cut off to make Eve. This legend may be found by those who understand Hebrew, and would like to read the original version, in the Talmud; but these are Moore's lines—

'They tell us that woman was made of a rib
Just picked from a corner so snug in the side ;
But the Rabbins swear to you that this is a fib,
And 'twas not so at all that the sex was supplied.

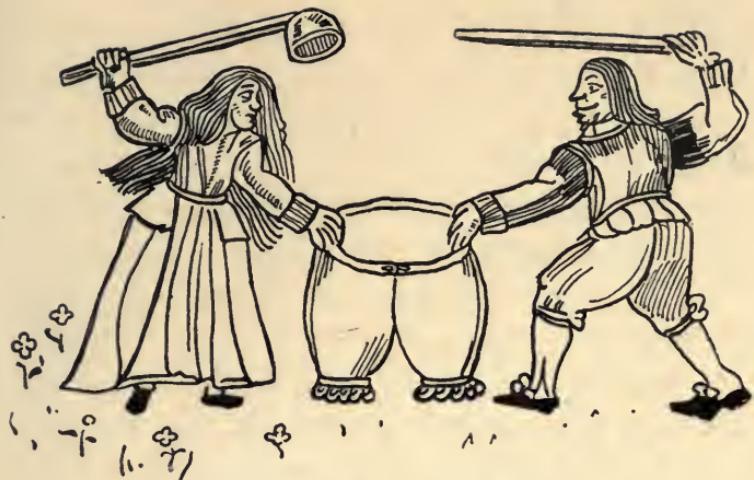
'The old Adam was fashioned, the first of his kind,
With a tail like a monkey, full yard and a span ;
And when Nature cut off this appendage behind,
Why, then woman was made of the tail of the man.

'If such is the tie between women and men,
The ninny who weds is a pitiful elf ;
For he takes to his tail, like an idiot, again,
And makes a most damnable ape of himself.

' Yet, if we may judge as the fashion prevails,
Ev'ry husband remembers the original plan,
And, knowing his wife is no more than his tail,
Why, he leaves her behind him as much as he can.'

And certainly Moore left *his* wife as much as possible, while he hob-nobbed with princes and was the lion of London salons.

But search the ranks of married men who have achieved fame, and few shall you find who found, and wed, their affinity. Affinities, it should seem, are rare when once you come to brains of more than ordinary calibre: your dull dog more readily finds his match than wits or witlings, and the community of the commonplace is an easier consummation than the happy combination of the unconventional.



THE STRUGGLE FOR THE BREECHES.

V.—DOMESTIC STRIFE.

MARRIED life is one long series of compromises—when, indeed, it is not a state of open warfare. The ‘mere man’ must be a little less than just, and more than a little selfish, who would assure himself of retaining his authority over the (more or less) ‘pleasing partner of his heart;’ for woman, be she never so sweet and gracious, is always greedy of power and domination, and though with ‘sweet Nellie,’ your ‘heart’s delight,’ the wish to rule may be possibly but a harmless and altogether amiable eccentricity, and your abandonment to her humours the wearing of golden and purely ornamental fetters, yet in process of time your benevolent despot may become more despotic and less benevolent, and your chains transmuted to more sordid guise. But with imperious Julia or

haughty Georgina 'tis another matter from the first ; your initial complaisance spells infirmity of purpose, and having once abdicated your authority, you are undone for always, and may for ever tarry in attendance upon the good lady's whims and 'ways,' while acquaintances sit in the seat of the scorner and opine that not you but the woman 'wears the breeches.'

O ! most miserable and ineffectual of men ; you who have the will-power of a jelly-fish and the courage of a cockroach ! The 'better half' is not yourself ; your partner has achieved her own 'betterment,' and your compensation is all to seek for the 'worsement' that remains your portion.

Life is compact of compromise, but keep it outside the home and rule absolute beneath your roof-tree. Then shall one have satisfaction and the other be convinced of orthodoxy in observing apostolic precepts. Compromise, as Captain de Valabréque found, is pleasing to neither side. A friend discovered him dressing for dinner at an unusual hour, and, in reply to the friend's inquiry, he said : ' It suits my wife to dine at four, and it is convenient for me to dine at six ; and so we sit down to table at five, which suits neither of us.'

Dual control, in fact, works smoothly neither socially nor politically, and though there may be wisdom in a multitude of counsellors, folly abides in divided authority everywhere, and nowhere more certainly than in domestic matters.

The New Women—female gendarmes, censors of morals, and would-be domestic tyrants—are quite alive to these objections against the division of authority, but their agreement goes no further. 'Woman ought to be and shall be' the head of the family, they say, and no statement is too rash for woman on the war-path to make or subscribe. Woman has ever been a religious animal, and even the modern woman differs little from her forbears in this respect; but do just remind her of St. Paul's views on the silence and subjection of her sex, and you learn that the militant saint was an ass—no less! And yet Paul remains the patron saint of the foremost diocese in Christendom. See to it, O New Woman! Disestablish him, and erect some more complaisant saint in his stead. Certainly his opinions and teaching flout the feminine Ego.*

* 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church . . . therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything' (Ephes. v. 22-24). 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord' (Col. iii. 18). 'Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence' (1 Tim. ii. 11, 12). 'But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man.' 'Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head.' 'For a man, indeed, ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man' (1 Cor. xi. 3, 5, 7-9). 'Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak: but they are commanded to be under obedience' (1 Cor. xiv. 34).

'No sensible woman,' wrote one of the most sensible of her sex,* 'objects to acknowledging what is the fact, that she is physically and mentally inferior to man. . . . The position of woman has always been, and will be, a subject one. . . . The man has always been, and will continue to be, the head of the family, and the position of the woman, to my mind, is perfectly summed up in the words, "Her desire shall be to her husband, and he shall rule over her."

For women to claim supremacy comes somewhat too late in the day to be effectual. There is a very pretty paradox concealed in the fact that their numbers constitute their weakness, for numerical preponderance is usually found to be an increase of strength; but the converse is the case where women are concerned. A wife may be had for the mere asking by any man, so great is the excess of women, and still so widespread the old-fashioned and right-minded notion that marriage rounds off and completes a woman's life. Scarce a man so ill-formed in mind or body, or so ill-found in worldly estate but could become a Benedick on the morrow, an he chose. Man's supremacy must infallibly last while he remains in a minority. He is already perfectly conscious that there are not enough of him to go round, and that this fact puts a premium upon his sex; and he can afford to smile at the women who have theories and air them so persistently. For

* Lady Jeune.

himself there is no occasion to protest so loudly, while nature continues to endow him with a larger quantity and a superior quality of brains: gives him greater bodily strength; and—best boon of all—keeps him in a minority.

And yet, although women are inferior to men in such important matters as intellect and strength, the 'hen-pecked husband' has ever been common, and the 'wearing of the breeches' by the wife has been a phrase, time out of mind, to denote

'She who with furious blows and loud-tongued noise
Doth tempests in her quiet household raise.'

There is a proverbial phrase to signify that the wife is master in the household, by which it is intimated that "she wears the breeches." The phrase is, it must be confessed, an odd one, and is only half-understood by modern explanations; but in mediæval story we learn how 'she' first put in her claim to wear this particular article of dress, how it was first disputed and contested, how she was at times defeated; but how, as a general rule, the claim was enforced. There was a French poet of the thirteenth century, Hugues Piancelles, two of whose *faiblaux*, or metrical tales, entitled the *Faiblau d'Estumi* and the *Faiblau de Sire Hains et de Dame Anieuse*, are preserved in manuscript, and have been printed in the collection of Barbazan. The second of these relates some of the adventures of a mediæval couple, whose household was not the

best regulated in the world. The name of the heroine of this story, Anieuse, is simply an old form of the French word *ennuyeuse*, and certainly Dame Anieuse was sufficiently *ennuyeuse* to her lord and husband. ‘Sire Hains,’ her husband, was, it appears, a maker of ‘cottes’ and mantles, and we should judge, also, by the point on which the quarrel turned, that he was partial to a good dinner. Dame Anieuse was of that disagreeable temper that, whenever Sire Hains told her of some particularly nice thing which he wished her to buy for his meal, she bought instead something which she knew was disagreeable to him. If he ordered boiled meat, she invariably roasted it, and further contrived that it should be so covered with cinders and ashes that he could not eat it. ‘This,’ observes Mr. Wright, ‘would show that people in the Middle Ages, except, perhaps, professional cooks, were very unapt at roasting meat.’ This state of things had gone on for some time, when one day Sire Hains gave orders to his wife to buy him fish for his dinner. The disobedient wife, instead of buying fish, provided nothing for his meal but a dish of spinach, telling him falsely that all the fish stank. This led to a violent quarrel, in which, after some fierce wrangling, especially on the part of the lady, Sire Hains proposes to decide their difference in a novel manner. ‘Early in the morning,’ he said, ‘I will take off my breeches and lay them down in the middle of the court, and the one who can win them shall be

acknowledged to be master or mistress of the house.'

*'Le matinet sans contredire
Voudrai mes braies deschaucier,
Et enmui nostre cort couchier ;
Et qui conquerre les porra,
Par bone reson monsterra
Qu'il est sire ou dame du nostr.'*

Dame Anieuse accepted the challenge with eagerness, and each prepared for the struggle. After due preparation, two neighbours, friend Symon and Dame Aupais, having been called in as witnesses, and the breeches, the object of dispute, having been placed on the pavement of the court, the battle began, with some slight parody on the formalities of the judicial combat.

The first blow was given by the Dame, who was so eager for the fray that she struck her husband before he had put himself on his guard ; and the war of tongues, in which at least Dame Anieuse had the best of it, went on at the same time as the other battle. Sire Hains ventured a slight ex-postulation on her eagerness for the fray, in answer to which she only threw in his teeth a fierce defiance to do his worst. Provoked at this, Sire Hains struck at her, and hit her over the eyebrows so effectively that the skin was discoloured ; and, over-confident in the effect of this first blow, he began rather too soon to exult over his wife's defeat. But Dame Anieuse was less disconcerted than he ex-

pected, and recovering quickly from the effect of the blow, she turned upon him and struck him on the same part of his face with such force, that she nearly knocked him over the sheepfold. Dame Anieuse, in her turn, now sneered over him, and while he was recovering from his confusion, her eyes fell upon the object of contention, and she rushed to it, and laid her hands upon it to carry it away. This movement roused Sire Hains, who instantly seized another part of the article of his dress of which he was thus in danger of being deprived, and began a struggle for possession, in which the said article underwent considerable dilapidation, and fragments of it were scattered about the court. In the midst of this struggle the actual fight recommenced, by the husband giving his wife so heavy a blow on the teeth, that her mouth was filled with blood. The effect was such that Sire Hains already reckoned on the victory, and proclaimed himself lord of the breeches.

*'Hains fier sa fame enni les denz
Tel cop, que la bouche dedenz
Li a toute emplice de sancz,
"Tien ore," dist Sire Hains, "anc
Je cuit que je t'ai bien atainte,
Or t'ai-je de deux colors tainte—
J'aurai les braies toutes voies."*

But the immediate effect on Dame Anieuse was only to render her more desperate. She quitted her hold on the disputed garment, and fell upon her husband with such a shower of blows that he

hardly knew which way to turn. She was thus, however, unconsciously exhausting herself, and Sire Hains soon recovered. The battle now became fiercer than ever, and the lady seemed to be gaining the upper hand, when Sire Hains gave her a skilful blow in the ribs, which nearly broke one of them, and considerably checked her ardour. Friend Symon here interposed, with the praiseworthy aim of restoring peace before further harm might be done, but in vain, for the lady was only rendered more obstinate by her mishap; and he agreed that it was useless to interfere before one had got a more decided advantage over the other. The fight therefore went on, the two combatants having now seized each other by the hair of the head, a mode of combat in which the advantages were rather on the side of the male. At this moment one of the judges, Dame Aupais, sympathising too much with Dame Anieuse, ventured some words of encouragement, which drew upon her a severe rebuke from her colleague, Symon, who intimated that if she interfered again there might be two pairs of combatants instead of one. Meanwhile, Dame Anieuse was becoming exhausted, and was evidently getting the worst of the contest, until at length, staggering from a vigorous push, she fell back into a large basket which lay behind her. Sire Hains stood over her exultingly, and Symon, as umpire, pronounced him victorious. He thereupon took possession of the disputed article of raiment, and again

invested himself with it, while the lady accepted faithfully the conditions imposed upon her, and we are assured by the poet that she was a good and obedient wife during the rest of her life.

In this story, which affords a curious picture of mediæval life, we learn the origin of the proverb relating to the possession and the wearing of the



MAN MASTERED.

[From a rare print after Van Mecken.]

breeches. Hugues Piancelles concludes his *faiblau* by recommending every man who has a disobedient wife to treat her in the same manner; and mediæval husbands appear to have followed his device without fear of laws against the ill-treatment of women.

Van Mecken, a Flemish artist who flourished in the fifteenth century, has left a record of domestic

strife in an engraving which shows the wife as victor in the struggle for the breeches ; and an ungenerous victor she would seem to have been, judging from the picture, where she is seen engaged at once in putting on the hard-won garments and striking her



A JUDICIAL DUEL.

[From an old German MS.]

husband on the head with a distaff. He, poor fellow, is following, under compulsion, some merely feminine occupation, and seems to find it uncongenial.

In Germany, during mediæval times, domestic differences were settled by judicial duels between man and wife, and a regular code for their proper

conduct was observed. 'The woman must be so prepared,' so the instructions run, 'that a sleeve of her chemise extend a small ell beyond her hand like a little sack: there indeed is put a stone weighing iii pounds; and she has nothing else but her chemise, and that is bound together between the legs with a lace. Then the man makes himself ready in the pit over against his wife. He is buried therein up to the girdle, and one hand is bound at the elbow to the side.'

Clay X
1/185

The seventeenth century seems to have been prolific of domestic broils, for an unusual number of pamphlets exist which have as their subject the attempts of women to obtain the upper hand over their husbands. One there is, called *Women's Fegaries*, which is especially bitter. A spirited woodcut on the cover shows a man and woman struggling for a pair of breeches, which certainly would be no gain to either of them, except as a trophy of victory, so immensely large are they. The woman wields a ladle; the man brandishes something that may be either a sword or a cudgel, and both seem in deadly earnest. The contents of this counterblast to women's efforts are extravagant and amusing; but you shall judge for yourself:—

‘The proverb says, “There is no wit like the woman's wit,” especially in matters of mischief, their natures being more prone to evil than good; for, being made of a knobby crooked rib, they contain something in their manners and dispositions of the



matter and form of which they were created, as may be instanced in several examples, of which we shall in this sheet of paper give you some of them.

‘At a town called *Stocking Pelham*, in the county [sic] of England, not long ago there happened a terrible fray betwixt the man of the house of one side, and his wife and his maid on the other side, and though two to one be great odds at football, yet, by the strength of his arm, and a good crab-tree cudgel, they felt by their bruised sides that he had gotten the victory. Now, though the man’s name was *William*, yet the wife for a great while did want her *Will*—I mean, how to be revenged upon him—until at last she effected, by policy, what she could not compass by strength ; for he, putting his head out of a window that had neither Glass nor Lettice belonging to it, but only a riding shutter, he having no eyes behind him, she nimbly stept to the shutter, and ran it up close to his neck, so that he was locked fast, as in a Pillory ; where, whilst the one kept him in, the other with a great washing-beetle, belaboured his body, as your Seamen do stock - fish. The maid - servant, a strong - docht wench, with both her hands laying on, and at every blow saying :—

‘“Remember how you beat my dame :
Now look for to be served the same.”

‘The poor man, to be rid of his tormentors, was glad to pray, crave, and entreat, and promise whatsoever they would have him, vowing never after to

use Crab-tree Cudgel again, nor so much as to eat of Mustard, if it were made of Verjuice, out of detestation to Crabs and Crab-trees.

*'Thus, women, you may learn a ready way
To make resisting husbands to obey :
Although to baste your sides their fingers itches,
You may, by policy, obtain the breeches.'*

'It is in the memory of man, since in *Black-Fryers* a Taylor and his Wife fell out about superiority. The Taylor fretted, and his Wife scolded, whereupon this ninth part of a man challenged her out into the street to try the conquest, having provided broom-staves there for that purpose. Being both entered the lists, the woman thought it best policy to begin first, and, catching up a Ram's Horn, which lay at her foot, she threw it at her husband, which by chance lighted on his forehead at the great end, and stuck there as fast as ever it grew upon the Ram's head ; which, having done, she ran in at the door again. The Taylor, being mad to be served so, went to run after her, but, making more haste than good speed, he ran his horn into the staple of the door, where he was so entangled by his brow antlers, that he could stir no further, which the woman perceiving, she got up one of the broom-staves, and so belaboured poor *Pilgarlick*, that, in great humility, he asked her forgiveness, and resigned the right of the breeches up to her.

'Twas in the sound of *Clerkenwell* bells, and

therefore of long standing, that a Plaisterer had gotten a most damnable Scold to his wife, who used to fetch him from the Ale-house. One night, coming home three-quarters drunk, she acted the part of *Zantippe*, and made the house to Ring with her scolding. This music was so untunable in her Husband's Ears, that, getting a cudgel in his hands, he fell to belabouring her until he made her to ask him for forgiveness, and promise never to scold so again. Having thus, as he thought, got an absolute conquest over her tongue, he went quietly to bed, where he slept soundly, whilst she lay awake studying of mischief. In the morning, before he awaked, she examined his pockets for money (the common tricks of a good many women), but found nothing in them, save only some lath nails; these did she take and set upright all about the room, which done, she gets a Pail of Water in her hands, and, calling aloud, commanded him to rise, which he refused to do; whereupon she throws the pail of water upon the bed. This so vexed him that, starting suddenly up, he went to run after her; when his naked feet lighting upon the lath nails, he was forced to slacken his pursuit, being so mortified with them that he could neither stand nor walk. Whereupon his wife, taking the same cudgel he had beaten her withall the night before, told him that *what was sauce for a Goose was sauce for a Gander*, and so be-rib-roasted him, that with great penitency he now asked her forgiveness, resigning the whole

right and title of the Breeches unto her, and that though he was superior to her in strength, yet he was inferior to her in policy.'

*'When as that women do themselves apply
To mischief, they perform it readily.
Nothing will serve them when their fingers itches
Until such time they have attained the breeches.
Be it to scold, to brangle, scratch, or fight,
Their hands are heavy though their tails are light.'*

'In that part of *Albion* which is called *Veal Country*, there formerly lived a merry saddler who had gotten a scolding carrion to wife that would frequent the ale-house almost every day, from which he was forced to fetch her home at night, where he would bestow some rib-roast upon her to give her a breathing that she might not grow foggy with drinking so much ale. However, the woman did not take it so kindly but that she vowed to be revenged upon him for it; and to put her determination into practice, one day she asked two of her boon companions to get her husband to the ale-house and make him drunk, which they performed according to her desire, leading him home about ten o'clock at night, and placing him in a chair with a good fire before him, where he presently fell fast asleep: now had the woman a fit opportunity to put her design into practice, when pulling out his feet towards the fire, and the fire so near towards them as it almost touched them, she went to bed,

when quickly his shoes began to fry, and his feet were mortified with the burning, so that he made a most sad, dolorous noise. She, knowing the fish was caught that she had laid wait for, went down with a good ashen wand in her hand. "You ill-conditioned slave," quoth she, "must you come home drunk and make such a noise that one cannot rest in quiet for you? I will make you to roar for something," and thereupon fell on him with as much Fury as a Pyrat doth on a Merchant's bark. The poor Sadler was forced to endure all, for he could not help himself; but, desiring her to be merciful, he resigned up the breeches to her, she tryumphing in her double conquest, first paying him who used to pay her, and, secondly, bringing him into that condition that for three-quarters of a year afterwards he did not stir out of doors to fetch her from the ale-house :—

*'Women, like pismires, have their sting,
And several ways to pass their ends do bring.
Their tongues are nimble, nor their hands crazy,
Although to work, each limb they have is lazy.'*

'Many other examples might we instance of the imperiousness of women, and what stratagems they have invented for gaining the Breeches from their Husbands, but these I think may suffice for one single sheet of paper, and, indeed, as many as can well be afforded for four Farthings; but least any one should complain of a hard pennyworth, to

make him amends, I will afford him a song into the bargain :—

‘THE SONG.

‘When women that they do meet together,
Their tongues do run all sorts of weather,
Their noses are short, and their tongues they are long,
And tittle, tittle, tattle is all their song.

‘Now that women (like the world) do grow worse and worse, I have read in a very learned authour, viz., *Poor Robin’s Almanack*, how that about two hundred and fifty years ago (as near as he could remember) there was a great sickness almost throughout the whole world, wherein there dyed Forty-five millions, eight hundred, seventy-three thousand, six hundred and ninety-two good women, and of bad women only three hundred, forty and four; by reason whereof there hath been such a scarcity of good women ever since: the whole breed of them being almost utterly extinct.’

And so an end. But the author of this pamphlet is not alone in his satires of domestic infelicity. Here you shall see, in *The Woman to the Plow*, how these things struck our forbears. He has good ideas, this seventeenth-century versifier, but his gifts in the matter of rhyme and rhythm are all too slight :—

THE WOMAN TO THE PLOW AND THE MAN TO
THE HEN-ROOST;

OR, A FINE WAY TO CURE A COT QUEAN.

Both men and women, listen well,
A merry jest I will you tell,
Betwixt a good man and his wife
Who fell the other day at strife.
He chid her for her huswivery,
And she found fault as well as he.

He says :—

‘Sith you and I cannot agree,
Let’s change our work’—‘Content,’ quoth she.
‘My wheel and distaff, here, take thou,
And I will drive the cart and plow.’
This was concluded ’twixt them both :
To cart and plow the goodwife goeth.
The good man he at home doth tarry,
To see that nothing doth miscarry.
An apron he before him put :
Judge :—Was not this a handsome slut ?
He fleets the milk, he makes the cheese ;
He gropes the hens, the ducks, and geese ;
He brews and bakes as well’s he can ;
But not as it should be done, poor man.
As he did make his cheese one day
Two pigs their bellies broke with whey :
Nothing that he in hand did take
Did come to good. Once he did bake,
And burnt the bread as black as a stock.
Another time he went to rock
The cradle, and threw the child o’ the floor,
And broke his nose, and hurt it sore.
He went to milk, one evening-tide,
A skittish cow, on the wrong side—
His pail was full of milk, God wot,
She kick’d and spilt it ev’ry jot :

Besides, she hit him a blow on th' face
Which was scant well in six weeks' space.
Thus was he served, and yet to dwell
On more misfortunes that befell
Before his apron he'd leave off,
Though all his neighbours did him scoff.
Now list and mark one pretty jest,
'Twill make you laugh above the rest.
As he to churn his butter went
One morning, with a good intent,
The cot-quean fool did surely dream,
For he had quite forgot the cream.
He churned all day with all his might,
And yet he could get no butter at night.
'Twere strange indeed, for me to utter
That without cream he could make butter.
Now having shew'd his huswifery,
Who did all things thus untowardly,
Unto the good wife I'll turn my rhyme,
And tell you how she spent her time.
She used to drive the cart and plow,
But do't well she knew not how.
She made so many banks i' th' ground,
He'd been better have given five pound
That she had never ta'en in hand,
So sorely she did spoil the land.
As she did go to sow likewise,
She made a feast for crows and pies,
She threw away a handful at a place,
And left all bare another space.
At the harrow she could not rule the mare,
But bid one land, and left two bare :
And shortly after, well-a-day,
As she came home with a load of hay,
She overthrew it, nay, and worse,
She broke the cart and kill'd a horse.
The goodman that time had ill-luck ;
He let in the sow and killed a duck,
And, being grieved at his heart,

For loss on 's duck, his horse and cart,
The many hurts on both sides done,
His eyes did with salt water run.

'Then now,' quoth he, 'full well I see,
The wheel's for her, the plow's for me.
I thee entreat,' quoth he, 'good wife,
To take my charge, and all my life
I'll never meddle with huswifery more.'

The goodwife she was well content,
And about her huswifery she went ;
He to hedging and to ditching,
Reaping, mowing, lading, pitching.

And let us hope that, like the Prince and Princess
in the fairy tale, they lived happily ever afterwards.
But I have my doubts.

and = examples of
setups by
women in various
jobs

VI.—WOMEN IN MEN'S EMPLOYMENTS.

Notes are needed

THAT Woman's true profession is marriage is a fact commonly blinked in these times when, owing to their greater numbers, it is become inevitable that many women must go through life as spinsters. Not every woman may become the mistress of a home in these days when the proportion of females to males is growing larger and more evident year by year: not all the women and girls can attain to that ideal of marriage which they so ardently desire, now that women outnumber the men in Great Britain and Ireland alone by nearly a million; and so, to cover their failure in life, the unmarried have started the heresy that woman's mission is domination rather than submission; that woman's sphere of action and influence is not properly confined to the home, but is rightly universal, and that marriage is an evil which destroys their individuality. These failures, rightly to call those who cannot achieve legalised coverture, are, of course, of all classes, but chiefly and equally of course, they belong to the wage-earning class, and must seek employment wherewith to support

their existence in an undesired spinsterhood. The growing competition of women with one another in feminine employments, the higher education of modern girls, the increasing tendency of men to defer marriage, or to remain bachelors altogether—all these causes have led to woman's turning from the long-since overstocked markets for woman's work to the more highly-paid functions fulfilled by men. Then, also, the new employments and professions evolved from the increasingly complex civilisation of this dying nineteenth century, have been almost exclusively feminised by the *femmes soles* who are occupied nowadays as clerks, shorthand writers, journalists, type-writers—*vulgo* 'typists'—doctors, dentists, telephonists, telegraphists, decorators, photographers, florists, and librarians. A lower social stratum takes to such employments as matchbox making, printers' folding and bookbinding, and a hundred other crafts. Where deftness of manipulation comes into request these wage-earning women have proved their right to their new places; but in the occupations of clerks, cashiers, telephonists, telegraphists, and shorthand writers they have sufficiently demonstrated their unfitness, and only retain their situations by reason of the lower wages they are prepared to accept, in competition with men, and through the sexual sentimentality which would rather have a pretty woman to flirt with in the intervals of typewriting than a merely useful and unornamental man. It may be inevitable, and

in accordance with the inexorable law of self-preservation, that women will continue to elbow men from their stools; but woman cannot reasonably expect, if she competes with man in the open market, to receive the old-time deference and chivalric treatment—real or assumed—that was hers when woman remained at home, and when the title of spinster was not an empty form. She must be content to forego much of the kindly usage that was hers before she became man's competitor; and if she fails in market overt, where chivalry has no place, why, she has no just cause of complaint. If the time is past when women were regarded as a cross between an angel and an idiot it is quite by her own doing, and if she no longer receives the deference that is the due of an angel, nor the compassionate consideration usually accorded an idiot, no one is to blame but herself.

If she would be content to earn her wages in those manly employments she has poached, and to refrain from the cry of triumph she cannot forbear, she would be a much more gracious figure, and, indeed, entitled to some sympathy; but foolish women are clamorously greedy of self-glorification, and still instant, in and out of season, in reviling the strength and mental agility of men which surpass their own and forbid for ever the possibility of female domination. And yet women, one might reasonably suppose, have no just cause of complaint in the matter of their mental and physical inferiority. The

feminine quality of cunning has ever stood them in good stead, and by its aid they have grasped advantages that could not have been theirs by right of their muscles or their reason. Cunning has taught them to use their shortcomings as claims for consideration, and to urge courtesy as their due in order to handicap men in the race. In the same manner Mr. Gladstone was wont, when all reasonable arguments had failed him, to urge his age as a claim to attention and a compliance with his policy ; and, whenever a cricket match is played between an eleven of gentlemen and a corresponding number of ladies, the men must fain tie one hand behind their backs and fend as best they may with the other, and use a stump in place of a bat. Again, when gloves are wagered on a race, who ever heard of pretty Fanny paying when her wager was lost ? You shall see an instance of feminine unreasonableness in competition with man in this tale of a race :—Mrs. Thornton, the wife of a Colonel Thornton, rode on horseback, in 1804, a match with a Mr. Frost, on the York racecourse. The course was four miles, and the stakes were 500 guineas, even. The race was run before an immense concourse, and eventually the lady lost ! She could not, of course, considering her sex, contain herself for indignation, and her letter to the *York Herald* which followed made complaint against Mr. Frost for having been lacking in courtesy in ‘ distancing her as much as he could.’ She challenged that discourteous sportsman to

another match, but he very rightly considered that sport is masculine, and did not accept.

Many thousands of girls and unmarried women live nowadays upon their earnings in a solitary existence. They are of all grades and classes; they have entered the professions, and even invention is numbered among their occupations, although the inability of women to originate is notorious. According to a statement in the *Times* of December, 1888, 'out of 2500 patents issued to women by the Government of the United States, none reveal a new principle.'

We have not many women inventors in these islands. Women have not had sufficient courage or rashness for dabbling in applied science, or meddling with mechanics. They owe even the sewing-machine, and all the improvements upon its crude beginnings, to man, and would have been content to wield the needle in slow and painful stitches for all time but for his intervention.

It was left for the Government to bring the employment of women forward, and successive Postmasters-General have sanctioned their introduction to post-offices; but as post-office clerks they have failed to give satisfaction. They readily assume official insolence, and carry it to an extent unknown even to Foreign Office male clerks, who were, before the introduction of women into the Civil Service, supposed to have attained the utmost heights of 'side' and official offensiveness. Many

have been the bitter letters addressed to the *Times*—that first resort of the aggrieved—upon the neglect and contumely heaped upon the public by the Postmaster-General's young ladies. But this neglect and studied insolence has, it must be owned, been chiefly shown by these Jacquettas in office to their own sex; and ladies have been observed to wait, with rage and vexation, for the tardy pleasure of female post-office clerks in condescending to notice their presence.

At one time the business of post-offices became served almost entirely by women. This was due not to any Governmental delusions upon the score of their merits, but was owing entirely to a cheese-paring economy which employed inferior wits at a lower wage than would have been acceptable to men. Even such extremely busy offices as those of Ludgate Circus and Lombard Street were filled with women, who elbowed men from their stools, and became so 'flurried' in the press of business that they frequently gave either too much change or too little over the counter, or committed such vagaries as giving ten shillings' worth of stamps for half-a-crown; or were incapable of weighing letters and parcels properly, so that the Post-office revenues were increased by packages being more than sufficiently stamped, or else were augmented by the fines levied upon addressees in cases where their inherent inability to juggle with figures had caused inadequate prepayment. Indeed, the woman who

can reason from cause to effect, or can employ the multiplication-table accurately (except under circumstances in which time is no object) is as much a 'sport'—as Professor Huxley might say—as a white raven or a cat born with six legs.

The storm of indignation was so great over these unbusinesslike doings, that even that elephantine creature—the Postmaster-General—was moved,* and the chiefest of the City post-offices are served now by men.

But the pert miss of the suburban post-office, and the establishments just beyond the City, is still very much in evidence. It is she who, with a crass stupidity almost beyond belief, misreads the telegrams handed in, and despatches the most extraordinary and extravagant messages that bear no sort of resemblance to their original draughts, and it is her sister at the other end of the wire who cannot interpret the dot and dash of the Morse system aright, and so further complicates affairs. The marvels and conveniency of telegraphy have been praised, and not beyond their due, but the other side of the medal has to be shown in the extraordinary and disquieting 'blunders,' perpetrated chiefly by female telegraphists, which spread dismay and consternation through such vital substitutions

* An amusing tale was told (which may or may not have been true) shortly after the introduction of women into the Postal Service, by which it would seem that a noble Postmaster-General, calling casually into a post-office, was refused information by two of his *employées*.

as 'father is dead,' for the original message of 'father is bad'; 'all going well: a little fire at 7 o'clock this morning,' in which 'fire' is transmitted instead of 'girl'; and the appalling error 'Come at once: mother much *diseased*,' in which the word 'diseased' usurps the place of 'distressed.'

The absurd way in which people have been summoned by telegraph to meet friends at places that not only did those friends not contemplate, but which either do not exist at all, or, at least, not in the situations some of these erring telegrams assign them, is within the experience of almost every one who is in the way of frequently receiving these pink missives at the post-office. 'Meet me 5 o'clock Saint Mary Abbots Church, Kensington,' has been rendered, 'Meet me 5 o'clock Saint Mark Abchurch, Kennington.' The substitution of 'Piccadilly' for 'Pevensey'; the omission of the second word in the address of 'Manchester Square,' and similar vagaries are common.

Of course this is not to say that they are only the women telegraph clerks who fall into these errors, but the greater percentage originates with them. The woman-clerk who receives a message through the wire cannot follow the telegraphic instrument with the attention that makes all the difference between accuracy and some dreadful blunder. Thus it is that in the domain of the electric telegraph the ineradicable tendency of her sex to argue from false premises, and her capacity

for jumping to erroneous conclusions are admirably well shown ; and the system by which telegrams are sent lends itself in the most complete and remarkable way to her errors of anticipation. The telegraphic alphabet now universally in use—known as the Morse system—consists of a series of dots and dashes ; and a message is spelled out by a laborious ticking of the magnetic needle at the office in receipt of the telegram. The message is read, tick by tick, from the needle's rapid oscillations :—‘Your sister di—’ ‘Oh,’ says the female telegraphist to herself, disregarding the next few movements of the needle, ‘died, of course,’ and so finishes the word. The needle continues ticking and the next words are spelled out, ‘with us last night, undertake —’ The telegraphist adds an ‘r’ to that word to make it fit her first guess, and reads off the remainder of the message, ‘to bring her up to-morrow,’ and so despatches an alarming telegram, which should have read harmlessly enough, ‘Your sister dined with us last night. Undertake to bring her up to-morrow.’

These things are sufficiently dreadful, and leave little room for exaggeration ; but one must scan more than doubtfully that tale of a telegram which when handed in read, ‘I tea with Mr. Smith in Dover Street. Stay for me,’ but which was changed into ‘I flee with Mrs. Smith to Dover straight. Pray for me.’

As for journalism, women have invaded the

newspaper offices to some purpose, and it is owing to them that the modern newspaper is usually an undistinguished farrago of wild and whirling words, ungrammatical at best, and at its worst a jumble of more or less malicious gossip, without sequence or thread of reason. The 'lady journalist' is no respecter of persons or institutions, and an easy impudence is natural to her contributions, whether her subject be peer or peasant. Proportion is in no sense her gift or acquirement: the death of a member of the 'submerged tenth' in a court off Fleet Street is more thrilling to her senses than the fall of a statesman from office; the cut of a dress or the shade of a ribbon wears an importance in her eyes that the rise and progress of trades can never win; and the babble of Social Science Congresses, or the lecturing of University Extensionists transcends the Parliamentary debater in her mind. 'Actuality' is her shibboleth and gush her output; and the heart actuates her pen rather than the head.

The journalist of years bygone was a very different being. His—for the old-time journalist was always masculine—his knowledge of frocks and flounces was *nil*; his habitat was generally a pot-house, and his speech was as often as not thick and husky with potations; but however confused his talk, and however objectionable his personality, his utterances in the press were apt and luminous and he took no bribes. In this last respect the

name and trade of a 'lady journalist' are somewhat stale and blown upon of late, and she has been revealed as the debaucher of newspaper morality, who, in league with the advertisement department, praises the shoddy goods of the advertising tradesman, while he who relies not upon *réclame* but on excellence of workmanship is dismissed with faint praise, or mentioned not at all. Worse than this unscrupulous fending for her employer—editor or advertising manager—she stoops to gifts in coin and kind from eager shopkeepers, panting to gain the ear and open the purse of the public, and when she has a fancy for any particular article, she begs it with an assurance born of the knowledge that her wishes will not be refused by the tradesman who has that article in his gift. He dare not do so, for his puff would be missing from the 'organ' that would otherwise have proclaimed the excellence of his wares to a gulled and gullible world.

Certainly, in all the man's employments she has invaded, in no other is woman so powerful for ill as in journalism.

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